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Jews in Many Lands

[See page 46]

YEMEN JEWS AT JERUSALEM

Jews in Many Lands

BY

ELKAN NATHAN ADLER

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את אחי אנכי מבקש

TO MY KIND AND HOSPITABLE
CO-RELIGIONISTS
IN MANY LANDS

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Presented by:-
Shri L. E. Reuben
Bombay
Date 1958.

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Preface

THE author's first visit to the East was a professional one, undertaken by instruction of the Council of the Holy Land Relief Fund. Its object was to clear up certain legal difficulties which had arisen on their estates at Jerusalem and Jaffa in consequence of the death of Sir Moses Montefiore in 1888. At that time their only buildings in Jerusalem were the Judah Touro Almshouse and a wind-mill. The vacant land adjoining had been "jumped" by about three hundred poor and desperate Jews who claimed that it had been originally intended for the poor, and they were poor. The journey was successful; the squatters were removed, and their place taken by industrious settlers who, through the agency of two building societies financed by the Sir Moses Montefiore Testimonial Committee, have erected some hundred and thirty decent little dwellings in place of the rude uninhabitable shanties standing there in 1888. The experience was exciting and stimulating, and encouraged the author not only to return to Palestine, but to make quite a number of other voyages to Jewish centres in the Old World as well as the New.

A more or less altruistic interest in his co-religionists was stimulated by a selfish taste for collecting records of the Jewish past, which grew with opportunity. There is no sport equal to the hunt for a buried manu-

script. Even an element of danger is not always lacking, and one hardly realizes how fascinating are the possibilities of a *trouvaille*. Given a certain amount of luck, one rises to an invincible optimism, which expects to make happy finds in the most unlikely places. And one isn't always, or even often, disappointed.

A lawyer's profession gives one plenty of opportunities. Business in Spain suggests Morocco, Russia is a stepping-stone to Central Asia, Egypt is but a night's journey from Palestine. And then a lawyer has healthily long vacations at least twice a year. It is quite wonderful to think how much one can do and how far one can go in two or three weeks. The modern traveller need only observe a few simple rules. If his time is limited, he should go straight to his destination and not fall out by the way. He should not observe times and seasons, nor be deterred by grandmotherly fears of hot or cold. There is much virtue in an Egyptian summer, much in a Russian one; neither is supposed to be the season, but natives live everywhere all the year round, and the traveller must be cosmopolitan. "Can't" lies in the churchyard, and "don't" is a word more honored in the breach than the observance. As for diet, too much is more dangerous than too little. The author has found continuous health depend upon plenty of green stuff and ripe fruit. Meat is quite unimportant; he has lived four months with only a single meat meal. But he objects to water except for external application.

In the last fifteen years he has managed to collect manuscripts at the rate of about a hundred a year and to visit each of the continents, except Australia, half a

dozen times or so.[1] And this without any undue sacrifice of either time or money. The following sketches are notes of his journeys to Jewry, for the most part written at the time and on the spot. Almost all have appeared in the Jewish or general press. His acknowledgments are due to the editors—especially of *The Jewish Chronicle* and the *Contemporary Review*—for allowing them to reappear in a collected form. He hopes they will not prove altogether stale and uninteresting. Future travellers will perhaps not be too proud to take a hint from an old stager. Everybody ought to travel. As facilities increase, probably everybody will. And there is nothing more pleasant than finding friends in every port, unless it is making them. Even the intervals between ports are both pleasant and healthful. Nowadays communications, though rapid, are so convenient that a sea voyage is prescribed by the faculty as a rest cure. But even in the stormier past no Jew feared the sea. His commercial insight appreciated the value of the ocean highway, and he had always the gift of language—a language extra.

Hebrew was—and is—a *lingua franca*, which unlocks the secrets of the fascinating coast and hinterland of the three great inland seas of the old world. As for America, it is now proven that all the great discoverers, from Columbus downward, had Jews with

[1] The following are his chief voyages: Egypt and Palestine in 1888, 1895, 1898, and 1901; Morocco in 1892, 1894, and 1900; Algiers and Tunis in 1894-5; Persia in 1896; Central Asia in 1897; Aleppo in 1898; Spain in 1892, 1894, 1900, and 1903; Russia in 1889, 1892, 1896, and 1897; North America in 1901, 1902, and twice in 1903; and South America and the West Indies in 1902-3.

them on their travels to interpret, to cheer, and to advise. Nor did the Jews lose any time in appreciating the value of the new continent, and at last the historians of America do them the justice of admitting that they were of the first colonists and the best. It was a peculiar gratification to the author on his way back from "Hispaniola" to find in Spain a copy of the very Nautical Tables used by Columbus, which had been compiled in Portugal by one Jew, printed there by another, and presented to him by a third.

January 21, 1905. E. N. A.

Jews in Many Lands

EGYPT IN 1888

Cairo — Cairene Jews — Synagogues — Maimonides — Karaites — Rabbanite Jews — Old Cairo — Inscriptions — A Jewish Wedding — Tabernacles — The Exodus.

CAIRO

To us Jews—although, as Heine would say, there are neither madonnas there nor prima donnas—Egypt must always be of supreme interest. In Egypt we find numerous traces of our ancestors before the Exodus, and their very portraits are distinguishable on the mummy wrappings at Boulak. In the shrunken, shrivelled features of Rameses II, we can trace the stern obstinacy of the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, just as we can picture to ourselves the tenderness of Bent Anat, the princess who rescued the infant Moses from a watery grave. King and princess both lie in the unpretentious museum on the banks of the Nile,[1] amidst a score of other royal mummies of historical note—perhaps on the very spot where, four thousand years ago, they were wont to come to bathe. Pithom and Raamses have been identified, and the journeyings of the Children of Israel mapped out with an accuracy which after all allowance is made for the alternative routes

[1] The museum has now been shifted to palatial quarters.

suggested by different Egyptologists, is unequalled by any description of the march of Xenophon's famous Ten Thousand not half so long ago, or that of the German invasion of France, which occurred but yesterday. Solomon, Jeremiah, Philo, Saadiah, and Maimonides were all intimately associated with Egypt. The magnificence of the Alexandrian Jews is a by-word in the Talmud, and the hair-splitting acumen of the Neo-Platonists the admiration of modern philosophy. Nay, the cross itself, which plays so important a part in the religion of our neighbors, and which has been for us the symbol of so much oppression, can in Cairo be traced to its very un-Christian origin in the world-old Nilometer, which has always, in a literal sense, been the measure of Egypt's salvation.

Cairene Jews

Probably no city in the world—perhaps not even Damascus itself, and certainly not Jerusalem—can, like Cairo, boast so uninterrupted a continuity of Jewish residence, ever since the memory of man. No city, therefore, can afford so large a field of interest to one who concerns himself with Jewish antiquities. And yet, strange to say, though hundreds of our co-religionists visit Cairo, either on their passage to or from India and the Colonies, or on a winter trip to Egypt for Egypt's sake, we were assured by the leaders of the community that scarcely any concern themselves in the slightest degree about the position of the Cairene Jews, past, present, or future. It was particularly fortunate that circumstances compelled me to spend Kippur and the earlier days of Succoth in Cairo, for the opportunity was an excellent one to see

our Egyptian co-religionists as they are. These holy days, so peculiarly calculated to excite and bring to the surface the most characteristically Jewish feelings, fall at a time of the year when the heat is so excessive that strangers dare not face it, and even resident foreigners flee from it, and it is not often that a European has the opportunity of joining the aborigines in celebrating their feasts. I arrived in Alexandria on the eve of Kippur, so that I could make only the briefest stay there, and had hardly time to see anything besides the great synagogue, the largest in Africa, which was being made clean and trim for the service of the evening. The ten o'clock express to Cairo by which I left, contained several Jews and Jewesses, who were hurrying back to the capital to spend the fast with their families; some had been staying in Alexandria for business, others for the sake of the sea-air. Among them I was delighted to discover a gentleman to whom I had a letter of introduction, and whose people were extremely kind to me throughout my stay. I was their guest the whole time, and their hospitality was my first and most agreeable experience of Oriental—and Jewish—characteristics. At two we dined that Friday, and at five we dined again, so that we were physically armed for the morrow. After nearly a week's abstention from animal food I found the cuisine, though strange, most tasty and palatable. Of course, we had rice and poultry,—they are fasting foods all the world over,—but also "we remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks" and olives and dates, such as can nowhere be seen in the same profusion as on the tables of Cairo. Shortly before six, I

accompanied my friends to the synagogue of Nissim Misséri Bey, one of the four brothers who constitute the well-known banking firm of Misséri Frères.

SYNAGOGUES

This private synagogue, within five minutes' walk of Shepheard's Hotel and in the Ismailiya quarter, was much nearer and therefore more convenient for me than the public Shools in the Muski, for the sun made walking almost an impossibility. It forms a sort of outhouse in the garden of the noble mansion in which the families of the four brothers live as a pattern united household. It is slightly smaller than the North London Synagogue, and much the same in style except that book-cases filled with Hebrew volumes occupy one side, and there is no gallery. The ladies sat outside under a large awning, amongst the palm trees, quite close to the open windows, so that they could have attended to the prayers if they had wished, which they did not. Evidently the charms of conversation are as alluring in the East as they are in the West, and the tongues of Eve's daughters do not vary with their complexions. As to externals, I was most struck by the kindly thought which had provided each congregant with a fan of feathers, white or red. At first my old-world notions revolted against the use of this feminine weapon, but the flesh was weak, nay, melting, so that I, too, succumbed. My black coat, decorous garb, was another sacrifice to the proprieties which I regretted, although, after all, I may not have suffered more from the heat than did my fellow-worshippers, for all that they were so lightly clad. Some wore Arab dress, but most—

for it was a fashionable though strictly orthodox congregation—were in mufti, but the fez was universal. Misséri himself was sometimes in European and sometimes in Oriental costume, like his house half Parisian and half African, perhaps because of his dual character as a Bey of Egypt and an Italian Chevalier. The Chazan—the best in Egypt, I was told—seemed to delight his audience, but the taste for his music requires to be cultivated. His nasal twang and sing-song chant, all in the minor key, were for all the world identical with those of the Moullahs in the mosques, whose calls, mingled with the barking of jackals, and screaming of hawks, and braying of donkeys, form the night cries of Cairo. We Jews always borrow from our environment, and anyone transported into a synagogue could, from the style of the decorations and character of the music, at once tell whether he was in a Catholic, a Protestant, or a Mohammedan country. The liturgy is that of the Italian Sephardim with some modifications, which constitute the "Minhag Mizraim," such as the Duchan every Sabbath, introduced by Maimonides. As our co-religionists there are not very learned in rabbinical lore, they are the more addicted to certain superstitions, and show a decided leaning toward the mysteries of the Kabbala. In the Kol Nidré service this was especially noticeable.

Misséri's is not the only private synagogue in Cairo. In Egypt and, indeed, throughout the Orient, it is the fashion for the leading Jews of the country to have synagogues of their own, which their friends and households attend, and which are sometimes as large as a public synagogue in Europe, while their embroid-

eries and plate are as rich. The custom is a good old-fashioned one, and used to be as prevalent in the West as it is in the East. People who have read Professor Kaufmann's charming biography of his wife's kinsman, R. Samson Wertheimer, who was *Hofjude* in Vienna some two hundred years ago, will recollect the description of his Shool, which was much such a one as that of Misséri. That of the Cattauis is larger and finer, and boasts of a gallery for ladies. It adjoins the magnificent residence of M. Moïse Cattaui, which was once the palace of one of Khedive Ismail's favorite Pashas, and was lent by its present owner to Lord Dufferin, who lived there during the three months or so that he spent in Egypt as England's Special Commissioner. For this attention Queen Victoria sent M. Cattaui her portrait, which he treasures with no little pride. The garden is almost a park, and it was a strange sight to English eyes to see some of our less devout, or more weary, co-religionists lying on the grass amid the cotton and plantain or date palms. On the west wall of the synagogue itself is a Hebrew tablet to the memory of a young son of M. Cattaui, who was murdered by Arabi's following on the awful night of the bombardment of Alexandria. Robbery was the motive, and his assailants chopped off a finger to get at his diamond ring. His untimely death cast a gloom not only over his immediate family, but over the whole Cairene community, for the Cattauis are great benefactors of their brethren, and surpassed by none in public spirit and intelligent liberality.

MAIMONIDES

Maimonides is, if I may say so, the patron saint of Cairo. Indeed, throughout the community he is known as רבנו משה הקדוש, "Our Rabbi Moses the Holy." In the Oriental quarter the chief synagogue is called after his name, and among its treasures is the כתר, or Bible, alleged to have been written by his own hand. In the courtyard of the synagogue is the spot where tradition says he lay buried until his body was removed to the Holy Land. This cellar-like vault is believed to be endowed with mystic virtues, so that it can heal the sick. And the efficacy of faith is so great that, to this day, patients who are brought there often recover. The Rambam's residence in Fostat, or Old Cairo, is, of course, historical; he was for years physician to the Kaliph, and it is a fact that the most valuable and authentic manuscripts of his works, including the famous "Yad ha-Chazakah" of the Bodleian with his signature, of which Dr. Neubauer gives a facsimile in his magnificent catalogue, were originally purchased in Cairo.[2] Another folio manuscript of the same work, five or six hundred years old, beautifully illuminated, was once the property of Abarbanel, who, believing it to be in the Rambam's own handwriting, paid three thousand ducats for it. This was recently shown me in Frankfort by Dr. Horovitz, who is collating it,

[2] Four or five autograph letters of his have been found in the Fostat Genizah. One is a genuine twelfth century שו"ת, i. e., "question and answer." The "case" is written first and, just as is counsel's practice still, the "opinion" follows on and is continued on the back.

and he pointed out to me some important *lectiones variae*. It belongs to a dealer in antiquities in Frankfort, who wants a thousand pounds for it. This, too, I believe, the great Spanish minister procured from Egypt, or at any rate from North Africa. Many legendary tales cluster round the Rambam's name, and form part of Cairene folk-lore. Thus the old story told by Dr. Gaster in his charming *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Sagen und Märchenkunde* has its original habitat in Cairo. We are told that Maimonides and his pupil, or, some say, teacher, had for years been seeking for the *elixir vitae*. At last they succeed, and cast lots who is to be first experimented upon. The lot falls upon the colleague of Maimonides, who forthwith cuts him up, sprinkles the pieces with the wonderful elixir, and puts them in an air-tight bottle, or receiver, which is not to be opened for nine months. After that time the daring student was to emerge resuscitated and immortal. But the experimentee was the King's physician, and when weeks pass and he does not turn up, the King gets uneasy and finds out that he was last seen in company of Maimonides. Summoned to the royal presence, the Jewish philosopher is forced to confess what he has done, and the King, in a fit of indignant piety, breaks the bottle so as to prevent an immortal man from posing as a god. In another account it is not the King but Maimonides himself who, from conscientious scruples, destroys the bottle, and with it his accomplice's chance of immortality. Dr. Gaster refers to similar tales told of Virgil and of Paracelsus, and also to one in which Aristotle plays the *corpus vile* to the Rambam's Faust.

KARAITES

Nowadays there are no Hebrew manuscripts of any importance to be bought in Cairo. The Karaite community possesses some interesting Biblical manuscripts of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, which, though fragmentary, are in good preservation. Their Chacham, Sabbatai Manjubi, has noted the dates and descriptions of these at the end of the various books, and he seems an intelligent man. The most curious of the Karaite manuscripts is a Massoretic Bible, which purports to have been written by Moses, the son of Asher, for the congregation of the Beni Mikra (i. e., the Textualists, or Karaites) in Cairo in the 827th year after the destruction of the Temple (i. e., 897 of the present era), about the time of Haroun Alraschid and our own Alfred the Great. The scribe's superscription runs as follows:

אני משה בן אשר כתבתי זה המחזור של בני מקרה בעיר קיריה
נכתב לקץ שמונה מאות שנה ועשרים ושבע לחרבן הבית.

None of these books durst they sell, for there is written on each a solemn curse on the man who should traffic in them. I heard that a few months previously many old Sepharim had been buried in the Beth Chaim of the Perushim, or orthodox Jews, at Bâsâtin, but I was assured by the authorities that these comprised only ragged printed books and modern Scrolls of the Law, which had become Pasul (unfit for use).[a]

Sunday the day after Kippur, I paid my first visit

[a] This was written at the end of 1888 when the Fostat Genizah was still undiscovered. For a list of Karaite manuscripts and books bought of the Chacham Sabbatai, see "Karaitica," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XII, pp. 674 *seq.*

to the Karaite synagogue, and to my astonishment found that the congregation kept the fast on that day, and thought me a heretic for not so doing. I could not ascertain whether their calendar made Sunday the tenth of Tishri, or if they calculate by the Arab lunar year. It may have been only a coincidence, but that Sunday was the tenth day of Moharrem, the first month of the Arab year and an Arab holy day, the Yôm 'Ashûra, on which Adam and Eve first met after their expulsion from Paradise, on which Noah left the Ark, and on which Hussein, Mahomet's grandson, fell at the battle of Kerbela. In memory of his martyrdom the Shiites still cut themselves on that day, and I shall not soon forget the horrible sight the dervishes presented as they marched past the Gâma el Hassanên into the Muski, a gruesome procession dripping with blood. Before entering the Karaite synagogue, which, like a mosque, is richly carpeted, one is obliged to take off one's shoes. The worshippers stood or squatted on the carpet, there were no seats, nor any Almemar in the centre of the building. The Chacham, a dignified old man, and the Chazan, each had a reading desk facing the ark, and the devotion was admirable. They read the Torah from a book with points and accents, and their ritual differs entirely from that of the Sephardim, and mainly consists of quotations from the Bible. The women and girls, gaily dressed in festive attire, remained outside in the courtyard. They stood in picturesque groups which I longed to have sketched or photographed, but when I suggested sending for a photographer, I was rebuked with holy horror. The Karaites live in a separate part of the Jewish quarter.

and their type—the most handsome I have come across—closely, almost indistinguishably, resembles the Arab. Perhaps the race is hybridized by intermarriage. Indeed, the other Jews look down upon them as bastards, and call them Mamzerim, and will not enter their synagogue or mix with them. There are not a great many of them, perhaps five hundred in all.

Rabbanite Jews

The orthodox community, which, of course, constitutes the large bulk of the Jews in Cairo, exceeds ten thousand in number, and is respectable, hardworking, and not unpopular. Most of the business is in their hands. They are the leading bankers, cigarette makers, and merchants, and, of course, dealers in Oriental manufactures and curiosities. Their stores are the finest in the bazaars, and their character for probity is certainly placed higher by travellers than that of their Moslem fellow-citizens. The trade with the interior of Africa, until our policy closed the Soudan, was almost entirely Jewish, and, indeed, a member of one famous firm told me that their Khartoum agent was now chancellor to the Mahdi, whose exchequer he had replenished with some fourteen thousand pounds belonging to them! The Cairene Jews are the best linguists in the world. Besides Arabic and Hebrew, all, with the exception of the Karaites, talk the Jewish-Spanish jargon, known as Ladino. The wealthier classes talk Italian in society, and have their children taught French and English. In fact, for confusion of tongues the Egyptian capital must be the modern Babel, especially the Old Tower on the Citadel, now that it is tenanted by Tommy

Atkins, who in all languages makes himself understood. I saw no black Jews, and do not believe there are any, although I was assured that numbers of white Jews can and do live up the Nile in Berber and Khartoum, and even further in the interior and nearer the equator. Practically all are Sephardim, and the prevalence of red hair is a peculiarity which may seem strange. Most of them dress in Oriental fashion and to the untutored eye are hardly distinguishable from the Moslem. They act in strict conformity with the observances of our faith, and, barring their foible for superstitions, which, like all Jews, they have borrowed from their non-Jewish and un-Jewish neighbors, are a very creditable community. Their charitable requirements are looked after by a committee of the leading members, and I understand that money is being collected to build a sort of Cathedral Synagogue on the European model in the Ismailiya quarter. Still, their communal institutions cannot be said to be very flourishing. The hospital is somewhat primitive, but the dispensary not bad. The schools were founded in 1846 with much *éclat,* by Crémieux and Munk, after the triumphant return of Sir Moses Montefiore and the great French jurist from their mission to Damascus. One result of this mission was to knit the Eastern Jews to those of the West, and the visible expression of this union was the *Alliance Israélite Universelle,* established by Crémieux, who to this day is affectionately regarded throughout the East as its beneficent founder and Grand Master, and his portrait treasured accordingly. Victor Hugo, by the by, who survived him, had appointed him one of his executors. But, though in Egypt the *Alliance* found

its first field of operations, the schools are not yet much to boast of, nor do they provide sufficient accommodation for the population. Till Madame Otterbourg, of Paris, and her sisters visited Cairo two or three years ago, there was no Jewish teacher in the girls' school, and no Hebrew or religion was taught there. This defect has since been remedied, but, though the girls look most intelligent, the style of instruction and the school appliances are much inferior to those of other schools of the *Alliance Israélite* in Asia Minor, though even these err in being rather secular than Jewish. The boys' school in the Muski is more satisfactory, the pupils clever, the masters energetic. The schoolrooms seem somewhat exiguous, dark, and stuffy, in comparison with a London Board School, but this may be the fault of the climate. The fierce light that beats upon Egypt and hatches the crocodiles' eggs is not esteemed so highly by the natives as it is by one accustomed to a northern sun. The "Ecole Payante," or "Ecole Cattaui," for boys is deserving of much praise, and it were well if we had a similar institution in London. It is a school founded by M. Cattaui for the children of well-to-do parents. The instruction given is good, about that of an average private school in England. The programme includes Euclid, algebra, and geography, and especially languages—Hebrew, Arabic, Italian, and English. The Hebrew is elementary—Rashi in the highest class. The boys stay till they are fourteen or fifteen years old, and then go into business, or in some cases are sent to Europe to complete their education.

In all the schools the prevalence of ophthalmia—the curse of Cairo—strikes one as very terrible. The

girls seem to suffer even more than the boys, and the head-mistress assured me that a very large proportion of the pupils was always absent through diseases of the eye.

Old Cairo

One of the most noteworthy of the Jewish antiquities in or near Cairo is the old Jewish burial ground of Bâsâtin on the right bank of the Nile, with its flat white gravestones, which form so curious a landmark as the train passes on its way to the baths of Helouan. But even this ancient God's-acre, with all its silent records of the past, must yield in interest to the synagogue in Old Cairo, or "Babylon," as it was sometimes called. Among the archives of the congregation kept for safe custody in the strong room of a communal leader—and banker—is a firman from some Soldan or Kaliph. This title deed is eight hundred years old, or more, and purports to confirm the Jews in the ownership of the בית הכנסת של עזרא. The synagogue is in what was formerly known as Fostat, and it is a pretty longish drive from Cairo proper. Maimonides calls it a two Sabbath days' journey, and it is quite three or four miles away from the Jewish quarter in the Muski.

The guide books say that it was once the Church of St. Michael, and in style of architecture it certainly does resemble the Coptic basilicas which adjoin it. Associated with it are several curious and interesting legends about Moses, Elijah, and Ezra; it is alluded to by our Jewish Marco Polo, the great traveller Benjamin of Tudela, who visited it in 1173, and says that on that very spot Moses was supposed to have prayed that the plague of hail might cease. By the natives

it is known as the Esh Shamyan, or Keniset Eliyâhu. To the right and left of the centre aisle, which terminates in the principal ark, are alcoves containing subsidiary arks, on the doors of which the twenty-fourth Psalm is carved in relief. This is very usual in Oriental synagogues, which, like others of the Sephardic rite, are not embellished by curtains embroidered by the fair hands of the daughters of Israel. The shape of the letters is antique, and the workmanship extremely good. High up (about sixteen feet) on the right corner of the alcove to the left is a little cupboard, where they keep the Scroll of the Torah which Ezra the Scribe is said to have written with his own hand. Graetz has denounced this famous scroll as a sham, a fraud, a delusion, and a snare, but the natives attach, or profess to attach, great veneration to it, and have a superstition that whoever is present when it is taken out will die within the year. Dr. A. Asher suggested that, though the reluctance to show the book was too strong to be feigned, its superstitious element was only a make-believe, for he humorously attributed the objection to a fear of the true facts of the case being discovered, should the precious manuscript be "seen too oft." Anyhow, I had the greatest difficulty in persuading my cicerone, who was the beadle's son, and presumably *au fait* with things divine, and a holy man, to let me climb a very shaky ladder and have a look at it. At last I had my way, but not without almost realizing his superstitious fears, for I was within a little of breaking my neck. The steps were rotten, and as I stood on the topmost rung I swayed, and felt like Mahomet, 'twixt heaven and earth.

I found a door closing a small aperture, opened it, and discovered a torn and somewhat mouldy Sepher inside, which was evidently Pasul. The writing was easily legible and to my inexperienced eyes quite modern. I should be greatly surprised if it were found to be three hundred years old.

Inscriptions

In a corresponding alcove, on the right hand side, I discovered a genuine antiquity, which has not, to my knowledge, been alluded to by any travellers. About twelve feet high and round three sides of the wall runs a single line inscription carved in the stone, the carving good, the characters antique, and no spaces between words. It is worth while reproducing, if only because it furnishes a foil to the not less affecting, though so much more modern, inscription in the Cattaui Synagogue to which I have already referred. As far as I could make it out, it runs thus:

...ודשלמההנחטף בקצרות השנים רוח י״י הניחנו ינחם לבאח...הנדיב הושע
ברבנקמורחננאלהזקן היקר נעברבנקמרנאורבנא-אברהם הזקן
הידועאלאמש . . .

I read as follows:

דו שלמה הנחטף בקצרות השנים רוח י״י הניחנו ינחם לב אחינו
הנדיב יהושע ברבן ק״מ״ור״חננאל הזקן היקר נ״עברבן ק״ מרנא
ורבנא אברהם הזקן הידוע אלאמש

The inscription seems to be to the memory of "David Solomon, who was snatched away while of tender years; the spirit of the Lord brought him to rest. May the Lord comfort the heart of our brother, the princely Joshua, son of our Rabbi and Teacher, the holy Chananel, the estimable sage who rests in Eden, himself the son of our Rabbi and Teacher, the sage Abraham, the famous Alamsi (Alamin?)!" The last

word is evidently a surname, and perhaps the key to the whole memorial inscription. Unfortunately the last letter (or letters) is covered, as in the two other cases, by boards of wood, which I could not remove. The epithet Kadosh, "holy," is generally applied to martyrs only. There is no date, but I should fancy it cannot well be less than five hundred years old, and may possibly be considerably older.

In the cloisters of one of the churches at Florence, there is a similarly sad inscription about a lost child, "whose parents all mothers that saw it used to envy." The story is not an uncommon one—the loss of a promising child happens only too often, but one touch of nature makes the whole world kin. We know nothing of the cause of the little lad's death, and are free to picture to ourselves the romance of a terrible life under the Fâtimite Kaliphs in the time of the Crusades. The whole synagogue is a gem of antiquity. Divine service is still held there regularly, but though the attendance is sparse, creature comforts have to be provided for, and it was not without a shudder that I heard that the respectable community of Cairo had resolved to have it whitewashed, cleaned, and renovated in a few months. My fears were not justified: indeed, it was probably owing to the restoration of the building that the famous Genizah was discovered, into which it was the author's privilege to be the first European to enter, on January 3, 1896.

A Jewish Wedding

On the eve of Succoth, I saw a Jewish wedding. My dragoman, Mustapha Abdwerahman, was piloting me through the Bazaar of the Saddlers, when suddenly

the strains of weird Arab music struck upon our ears. Like all Egyptians passionately devoted to anything in the nature of a *fantasiya*, my guide made me follow him to the source of the melody. We threaded our way through a narrow lane, the houses of which had a common gallery on the first floor, where three musicians were stationed. We climbed up and found a room full of people. The beadle of the Misséri Synagogue was there, and from the honor shown him, I soon gathered that I was in a Jewish interior and not in a Moslem harem as I had hoped. The ceremony was just over, and the friends of the happy couple were congratulating them and taking refreshments at the same time. I, too, paid my respects to the bride, who sat beside her parents on a divan at one end of the room, while her husband lingered shyly at the other. She was young, very young, and her husband was not much older, but as to her beauty I cannot speak, for she was thickly veiled. The bridal dress of some flimsy white stuff did not seem very different from what one wears in Europe, and, indeed, the similarity of the function to the wedding "at homes," which are growing so fashionable, struck me as ludicrously incongruous. The people were evidently poor, but everything was clean, and everbody was most decorous and polite. The young man was an artisan, who certainly gave evidence of considerable *tact* in availing himself of what was practically three days' holiday for his honeymoon.

Tabernacles

I was struck with the number and size, nay, even elegance, of the tabernacles in the fash-

ionable Ismailiya quarter near the Ezbekiye, or Hyde Park of Cairo—of course, the Jewish quarter literally swarmed with them. One European indispensable I missed: no Succah was provided with shutters—but then it never rains! Most were built on the flat roofs, and some in the gardens, though these are as a rule too shady for the purpose. The roof was composed of palm branches, an extravagance to my eyes, which have been accustomed to see Ethrogim hanging from the roof as ornaments, but Lulabim never before! However, palms are abundant in Egypt, and though I had to pay a very European price for my own Ethrog and Lulab, I suppose it was for the same reason that the stranger finds coals dear at Newcastle. Looking round from my entertainer's roof, I could see so many palaces with large Succoth that I could almost imagine myself in a new Jerusalem, and feel happy, were it not for an uneasy feeling that there is a tendency, as a Jewish colleague, an advocate in the International Tribunal, wittily told me, to replace the Temple by the Bourse in the Place Méhémet Ali in Alexandria. Indeed, the Emperor Hadrian noticed this failing of Israel in Egypt, for, in a letter to Servianus, he says of the Alexandrians that "they all really recognize one god only, the same who is worshipped by Christians, Jews, and all nations." That god is, of course, Mammon, whose very name, I am sorry to say, is Semitic.

The Exodus

Of the Egypt of the Exodus I had but a glimpse as our English engine snorted through the dusty land of Goshen. We sailed across the Red Sea, and afterwards rode for a few hours on donkeys in the desert of

Arabia Petræa as far as Ain Mûsa. This is an oasis, which some authorities (e. g., Brugsch) identify as Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and three-score and ten palm trees. Arab traditions point to it as Marah, for the water in some of the wells there is more brackish than in others. Some is quite drinkable, and it does not require a great stretch of the imagination to attribute its comparative palatability to a miracle. Most probably, however, Ain Mûsa is the place where the Israelites sang the triumphal Song of Moses. I devoured multitudes of dates which grew there, and blessed the spot, for they were very nice. On the way to the Suez Canal we had also passed Tell el-Yehûdyeh (the Hill, or Mound, of the Jews), about twenty miles from Cairo, where Onias, the high priest, erected a temple for the Palestinian refugees who fled with him from the bigotry of Antiochus. No trace of the building remains, but Brugsch discovered some Jewish antiquities there, now exhibited in the museum of Boulak. But all these details, are they not written in the books of those wise in the wisdom of Egypt?

FROM JAFFA TO JERUSALEM

The Crowded East — Landing at Jaffa — The Drive to Jerusalem — The Suburbs of Jerusalem.

The Crowded East

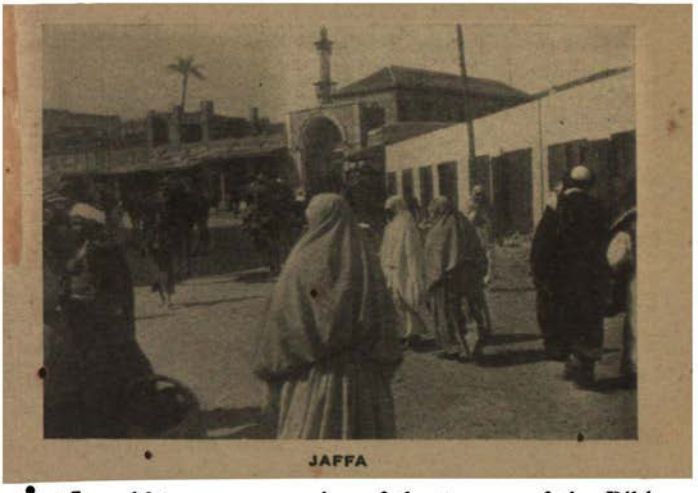
THE greatest of all surprises to the explorer of the old Old World is the smallness of everything. To modern notions all ancient cities seem tiny, and except for the oceans of talk which surround and glorify them they would be deemed utterly insignificant. Of no place is this so true as of Palestine. The Holy Land which occupies so much of our literature, so much of our thoughts, which is, or ought to be, a part of our very selves, and in a moral, if not in a real sense, the hub of the universe, the cradle of mankind, is in area no larger than Kent, and in population less than Liverpool. Another surprise is its proximity and accessibility. It is only a night's journey from the Suez Canal, the great thoroughfare of modern commerce. Port Said is barely six days' journey from London, and Jaffa only a dozen hours from Port Said. Unfortunately, so far as material prosperity and prospects are concerned, once round the clock is handicap enough to convert the good old times, when the valley of the Jordan was the highway of nations, into the desolation of the present. Nowadays, instead of rich caravans to tax, the natives can fleece only poor pilgrims or stingy tourists like ourselves. Palestine is a *cul-de-sac*, and must remain so until altered by some such marvellous scheme as the Duke of Sutherland's. The Duke

wishes us to avail ourselves of the natural depression of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, so as to constitute an interoceanic canal, which will give us a short cut to India; but the French millions sunk at Panama will prove a commercial deterrent more difficult than all the obstacles provided by nature. They talk of a railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and when I was at Constantinople, they said that M. Navon had obtained a concession from the Sublime Porte, and that the Sultan had actually signed the firman. I do not know how far this is true; it is whispered, indeed, that an Oriental railway king of many millions is syndicating the project, but I venture to predict that, unless the present Governor of Palestine loses his Vilayet within a short time, and a new Pasha arises who *does* like Navon, it will be ten years at least before the railway will be an accomplished fact. I doubt whether it would pay. Under the present conditions of little passenger and no goods traffic, it certainly could not, and I fancy that the gradients would be found unworkably steep for anything but the lightest of steam tramways.

Landing at Jaffa

I left the land of cartouches and tarbouches on a Tuesday evening, and before I was half-awake was bewildered by the babel of sounds which warned us that the mongrel Arab boatmen of Jaffa had surrounded our vessel, and were shouting and touting for a fare. The ship had to anchor in the open bay, for Jaffa harbor is a thing of the past only, and as the sea is generally very rough just there, the passenger finds that the discomforts he experiences in the landing boat

makes the land of his expectations all the dearer to him. As soon as we heard that land was in sight we, of course, rushed upon deck to gaze upon the Promised Land. For a while we feasted our eyes upon the beauties of the little port which, like Capri, nestles on the cliff. Immediately before us frowned the coast where Jonah was swallowed up by the whale, and where Perseus gallantly rescued Andromeda, but I must confess



JAFFA

that I could trace no remains of the terrors of the Bible monster or the Greek beauty's fascinations. Hurry and worry are the great enemies of sentiment, and I must plead guilty to having, at that particular psychological moment, felt more interested in Cook's red-jacketed boatmen than in all the picturesque beauties on which my eyes might have feasted. Some time elapsed before the red-jackets were allowed to board us. Quarantine regulations had to be complied with, and the Turkish officials are great sticklers for formalities.

It was a Russian boat—the "Cesarewitch"—we were on, and I cannot conceive in what language the ship's papers could have been made out. To my personal knowledge none of the officers could speak any civilized language except Russian,—and surely Russian is not civilized,—and when one of them had by chance rendered me some small service I had to thank him in Arabic! Even in Syria "Thank you" is the most useful word in the vocabulary, for does it not signify the grateful expectation of good things to come?

The Drive to Jerusalem

As soon as I could, I placed myself under the wing of Cook's representative, the modern Mercury's Mercury. I am afraid I worried the excellent man not a little, but I was extremely anxious to get to Jerusalem before nightfall. I had only eight hours to spare. Now the guide books, which differed in everything else, agreed in representing the distance to Jerusalem as eleven hours and a half at least, and "somewhat too long for a single day." Accordingly, I was prepared to do heroic things on Arab steeds and emulate school-boy recollections of Mr. Richard Turpin's famous ride to York. But adventures are not to the adventurous, and Dame Fortune, who has a mighty hankering after the commonplace, had arranged that my path was to be made smooth. Russian Archdukes were on their way to Palestine, and even Turkish indifference had to yield before the risk of shaking Imperial pilgrims overmuch, and so the road was actually being repaired. I was in too great a hurry to linger in Jaffa that morning, and as everybody is probably more interested in Jerusalem than Jaffa, I must defer an account of its eight

hundred lovely gardens, of which I am sorry to say only ten are in Jewish hands. Cook's man provided me with one of Howard's wagons, and, after a light breakfast, we got away by nine o'clock. Our vehicle was a sort of *char-à-banc,* and it did not take us long to discover that springs were conspicuous by their absence. Windows there were none, and though the curtains kept the heat in, my hat was less fortunate. I had doffed the imposing pith helmet with which I had hoped to astonish the natives, and after a few miles' rumbling on, I all at once discovered that it had vanished, so that till my arrival in Jerusalem I had only a light boating cap with which to face the midday sun. We had three horses and two Jehus, both of whom looked remarkably like co-religionists of ours, but were in reality pure-blooded Syrians, whose type of face proved their Semitic, but not a Jewish origin. In high spirits we started merrily on our way. Before long, however, the off-side leader got a leg over the traces and bolted, and we were within a little of being precipitated over the embankment, for the road there was a few feet higher than the fields of Indian corn on either side. Luckily, however, the horse fell before a worse disaster happened, and, though we rather bungled at first, we managed, with a remarkable but choice selection of Arabic oaths, to extricate the jade, and were soon making up for lost time. After about a dozen miles or so on the flat we reached Ramleh, where we refreshed ourselves with coffee. After that we left the sandy but wooded plain of the sea-coast with its palms and orange trees and cactus hedges, and commenced the ascent into the wild and rocky mountains, for Jerusalem lies twenty-five hundred feet high.

Here the likeness to Swiss scenery impressed itself more and more. I have been fortunate enough to travel over a good many mountain roads in the Lake District and the Highlands, in the Alps, and Tyrol, and Apennines, but, except perhaps on the Stelvio Pass, I do not remember ever having seen a more picturesque landscape than that which now disclosed itself to us. It was a most agreeable disappointment, for what I had been led to anticipate was a dull and dreary road, tolerable only because of its end. My companion was a German professor,—a colleague of a great friend of mine,—and his conversation was remarkably interesting, although he damped my sentimental ardors and irrepressible enthusiasm. He was a Teufelsdröckh, whose only love was science, and who professed to be altogether unmoved by the historical associations which began to crowd in upon us. He seemed concerned only about the geological peculiarities of the country, which, for the rest, are striking enough. Our drivers did not loiter long on the way, for, urged by the anticipations of *bakhshish*, which was to vary inversely as the length of the drive, they did not spare their horses. Thrice we stopped on the way. At Bâb-el-Wâdy we had expected to be greeted by a Jewish host, but he had been replaced by a Levantine, who told us some cock and bull story about his predecessor's peccadilloes. At our last wait, at Kulôniyeh, once a Roman colony and perhaps the Emmaus of the New Testament, we were met by a dragoman who came to sing the praises of his hotel. When Dr. R. declared his intention of patronizing Howard's Hotel, and I the Hotel Jerusalem, he hurried back on his donkey and got in

several minutes before we did. We arrived before five o'clock, and found that the fact of two strangers starting from Jaffa had been at once telegraphed to the hotel keepers by local friends. Modern improvements had disappointed us of our expectation of overwhelming the Orientals with a surprise visit, and a Matthew Arnold would have protested that Palestine was indeed true to its etymology and a land of Philistines.

The Suburbs of Jerusalem

The approach to Jerusalem was not imposing. No minarets or steeples can be seen from the Jaffa Road, and the quaint old Saracen fortifications and walls, which the Crusaders found so hard a nut to crack, are not visible till a turn in the road brings one almost suddenly to the Jaffa Gate. But if we failed to see any such architectural embellishments before driving into the courtyard of the Hotel Jerusalem, we noticed what from a practical, if not an æsthetic, point of view was more satisfactory. Our eyes were gladdened by trim rows of cottages built of white limestone, the glare of which was relieved by their red-tiled roofs. There were hundreds of these little houses constituting a new Jerusalem without the walls, and giving ground for the hope that there is yet a bright future for our co-religionists, as hard work and thrift replace the pauperism of past ages. Almost all these houses were tenanted by Jews, of whom nearly five thousand live outside the Jaffa Gate. Most were erected by building societies, some under the auspices of the Sir Moses Montefiore Testimonial Committee, but a large number by the independent co-operation

of *bonâ fide* residents, and paid for out of earnings. As soon as I entered the hotel, the proprietor, Mr. Kaminitz, made me feel quite at home, and my friend regretted that he had pledged himself to the rival establishment. Of the cleanliness and comfort of Kaminitz's Hotel, of his courtesy and that of his two sons, and of the excellence of his wife's cuisine, I cannot speak too highly. But he does not need my recommendation, the eloquent praises in all languages from Hebrew to Greek and English to Arabic contained in his Visitors' Book would alone suffice to tempt travellers to patronize his hotel. The Earl and Countess of Meath, who spent six weeks there, Baron and Baroness Edmond de Rothschild, and the Jewish Ambassador of the United States at Constantinople and his wife, were among those who during the twelve months previous had expressed their entire satisfaction and delight with the attention they had received.

JERUSALEM

Architecture — Beggars — The Jews of Jerusalem — Russian Jews in Palestine — A Chassidish Dance — The Rejoicing of the Law — The Britzker Rav at Jerusalem — The Rothschild School in 1888 — Languages — The Workshops — The Pupils — The Orphan School and Others — Climate and Sanitation — Underground Jerusalem — Hospitals — Doctor d'Arbela — The Missionaries — Clocks — A Meeting — Tombs — King David's Sepulchre — Catacombs — Dervishes — Synagogues — The Chalukah System — Jewish Artisans.

ARCHITECTURE

THERE are no great triumphs of architecture in Jerusalem. It is not an Athens or a Rome. What buildings there are, are connected with religions, and mostly iconoclastic religions. Even the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the exception of some tawdry if expensive additions by the Catholics, Roman and Greek, is severely simple. The Mosque of Omar is externally beautiful, but association lends it a glamour it had not otherwise possessed. Well-preserved ruins are disappointingly few, but then it must not be forgotten that Jerusalem has been destroyed fourteen times and as often rebuilt. Some portions of the Cyclopean Walls of the Second Temple and of Herod's, notably the כותל מערבי, or Western Wall, have survived all the onslaughts of time and the enemy, but they are grand rather than handsome. Everywhere Jerusalem is more interesting than artistic. The quaintest of its ancient buildings is the so-called Tomb of Absalom, in the Val-

ley of Jehoshaphat, close by the Jewish gravestones that cluster at the foot of the Mount of Olives. It is a small square chapel or vault, cut out of the limestone rock, surrounded by about a dozen pillars with Ionic capitals; the whole surmounted by a curious, indented cupola, something like that of the Pavilion in Brighton. Jews and Gentiles firmly believe in the authenticity of the monument, and to this day our co-religionists are in the habit of throwing stones at the place, so as to impress on their children their undying detestation of a rebellious son. In its present form, it has probably been repaired and restored by the Romans, possibly under Trajan or Hadrian, when the Imperial architects followed the fashion and aped the Greeks. But it is quite likely that the tomb-chamber was originally cut out of the solid rock by the grief-stricken David, and that tradition is correct in its identification of the cenotaph, despite the comparatively modern alterations which the Romans made. Anyhow, it would not be the only antiquity there which has witnessed that mighty people's origin, development, decline, and fall. The visitor who expects to find even traces of a specifically Jewish architecture must be wofully disappointed. None ever existed, and even the Temple itself was probably only an imitation of the masterpieces of Egypt and Assyria, and in style a cross between the two. In *Les premières civilisations* Gustave Le Bon says of us that "*leurs villes, leurs temples, leurs palais, les Juifs étaient profondément incapables de les élever eux-mêmes; et au temps de leur plus grande puissance, sous le règne de Solomon, c'est de l'étranger qu'ils furent obligés de faire venir les architectes, les ouvriers, les artistes dont nul émule n'existait alors au*

seiu d'Israël." This is very unflattering, but I am not Chauvinist enough to deny that there is a great deal of truth in the statement. It is enough for us that, as trustees for humanity, we held the Land and the Book.

Beggars

As regards its inhabitants, Jerusalem is much better than its reputation. An impression prevails that it is a city of beggars, and I, for one, was fully prepared to find that it was so. I expected that even a week's residence would be rendered intolerable by their pesterings and complaints. But I was most agreeably disappointed, and can honestly say that I was less annoyed by mendicants, during my stay there, than I have been in Paris itself. Of course, there is a frightful amount of poverty, but in the East it is not so obtrusive as in the West, perhaps because it is really less painful. Nor did even the interior of the city seem as dirty as one had feared. It may be because I looked through rose-colored spectacles. It may be because none are so blind as those that will not see. It may be because I have passed through so complete an apprenticeship of dirt in Whitechapel that I am no longer impressionable. Or it may be, and I think this is the true reason, because there was really not so much dirt to be seen. It must not be forgotten that I reached the Holy City in holiday time, when half the inhabitants, for there are about twenty-three thousand[1]

[1] There are thirty-one Jewish colonies in the suburbs of Jerusalem, including one of Bokhariots and two of Yemenites. Each colony consists of a clump of fifty to a hundred little dwellings.

Jews in a total population of forty thousand, were resting from their labors and were dressed in holiday attire, and they and their houses were beautified by their holiday wash.

The Jews of Jerusalem

It is very hard to picture to Europeans the actual state of our brethren in Jerusalem. The various nationalities there together constitute a mosaic, which is unparalleled in any other part of the world, except perhaps in London, where, however, all differences are swamped in the infinity of sameness which surrounds them. In Jerusalem we meet European, Asiatic, and African Jews. Fez and Bokhara, Yemen and Daghestan, Tunis and Persia, the Atlas and the Caucasus, all have their representatives in the religious capital. To all Jews the Hebrew language is a *lingua franca*, but it is whispered that some Israelite subjects of his Ottoman Majesty know a secret language in addition which no non-Jew can understand, and of which I am equally ignorant. Perhaps this is the mysterious language of the Druses, those extraordinary Unitarians of whom Disraeli gives so vivid an account in "Tancred," when he describes his hero's visit to Astarte, the lovely Queen of the Ansarey. There are about seventy thousand living in the Lebanon and the Hauran, and there is also a colony of Druses in Safed. Sylvestre de Sacy wrote a great deal about them in 1828, and a recent paper published in the "Journal of the Palestine Exploration Society" completes our very scanty information on the subject. To this day the nature of their language remains one of the unsolved problems of philology. They guard their manu-

scripts so jealously that they are enjoined to kill any stranger found in possession of their sacred writings. It may well be that their language has been introduced into Jewry by Jews hailing from the Lebanon. Anyhow, the Jews have always had a certain amount of intercourse with them. They were known to and described by Benjamin of Tudela. Dr. Loewe, whose loss was so deeply deplored, knew as much about them as any one. He fell into their hands in 1838 when they invaded Palestine proper, and inflicted much suffering on the Jews of Safed and Tiberias. A Palestinian Leland is required to throw light upon their secret speech. But the staple dialects of our co-religionists continue to be the Judæo-Spanish and Jüdisch-Deutsch jargons according as their talkers are Sephardim or Ashkenazim.

I do not wish to be guilty of statistics,—at any rate more than I can help,—and I hope I shall be forgiven if the description of my impressions is as hazy as my diction is slipshod. I am writing these notes discursively and disjointedly from my only too dim recollections of my scamper through the East, and almost the only written material at my disposal are the letters I sent home during the journey. It is true that I jotted down in a note-book some facts and figures as I went on, but I was unlucky enough to trust the book to the tender mercies of my dragoman one night, as we cantered down the mountains and through the ravines to Jericho. He placed it with other articles of mine—mostly requisites of toilet—in a saddle-bag, but when daylight appeared, the saddle-bag had vanished. The Bedouins are perhaps the richer for my soap and brushes, as well as for my notes, and will doubtless

have, by this time, thoroughly tested the mysterious properties of those extraordinary adjuncts of civilization. I hope they have found them useful, and that the soap agreed with their—digestion. In modern—too modern—Jerusalem, I found no difficulty in replacing the brushes and the soap. I still hold, as a curiosity, the receipted bill for the same, written in pure Hebrew, and, after a prolonged use of them, am able to vouch that I got good value for my money. But as to my note-book, I live in fear and trembling that some Bedouin, more knowing than his fellows, may put it to ransom, and that it may fall into the hands of some Jerusalemite who can interpret my scrawl, and may find a few of my hasty criticisms more candid than complimentary. However, I myself must do the best I can without it, and be content with the supplementary information I was able to glean.

Russian Jews in Palestine

Jerusalem is the only place in the Orient where Yiddish is spoken to any extent. Nowhere else, either in Syria or Egypt, Asia Minor or Turkey, did I come across a single individual who spoke a word of it. It is true that, on board the postboat from Ismailiya to Port Said, I met a young apothecary whose German was of that complexion. He called himself a Viennese, but he hailed from Galicia originally and since from Jerusalem, to which city he was then returning. He did not impress me very favorably, for he made me think him a Pharisee of Pharisees. It was one of the intermediate days of the Feast of Tabernacles, and he was professing the most scrupulous orthodoxy and bemoaning that the exigencies of travel prevented his

using a Lulab and Ethrog. I offered him mine, but he declined to make the blessing over them, protesting that he had never yet made use of such bad ones. They had cost me a lot of money, and I felt the snub keenly! Afterwards I came across the man again. He looked me up in Jerusalem (he got there four days after I did), and solicited my good offices to get him admitted a student of the Lionel de Rothschild Technical School, of which more anon. I did not feel particularly beholden to him, but I can soothe my ruffled feelings by the reflection that I put no spoke in his wheel. Through the kindness of that excellent friend, M. Nissim Behar, he is now sawing wood instead of bones, or perhaps carving boxes instead of washing bottles.

Probably at least ten thousand Jews and Jewesses speak the Jüdisch-Deutsch dialect in Jerusalem, so that I felt quite at home, and, but for the clearness of the atmosphere, the narrow, vaulted streets, low houses with wooden gratings instead of windows, quaint costumes, and other local colorings, might well have thought myself in the East of London or some other Polish quarter. Half of the Jews and therefore more than a fourth of the entire population are Russians by birth or parentage, and have managed to impress their individuality very decidedly upon their environment. At the time of the Crimean War under Czar Nicholas, great changes arose in the official treatment of the Jews of Russia. They did good service as soldiers, and it was the Government's desire to assimilate them to the rest of the population. There was nothing Machiavellian about the wish at first, though it has since operated cruel wrong and hardship and

malignant injustice. Many Jews sooner than give up —as Nicholas desired them to do—their ancient costume, which was a custom to them more hallowed almost than religion, migrated to the Holy Land. So it happens that the Russian immigrants retain in Palestine the fur-lined caps which have survived in Russia as fittest to counteract the icy blasts of the steppes. They looked very much out of place in Jerusalem, but, curiously enough, their wearers did not seem to find them insupportable in the tropical heat. It was very amusing to see my Polish co-religionists, old and young,—and the little boys looked particularly comical,—wearing flat circular birettas of black velvet or velveteen, trimmed all round with fur, and, to all intents and purposes, like a large and greasy plate with a broad brown-yellow rim. Underneath this extraordinary covering, which, I am told, is the common head-dress of the Russian Moujik, nestle the shaggy locks and beard of the wearers, whose Péoth, or corkscrew kiss-curls, hanging over each temple, give them a most characteristic appearance. From the neck downward they are ordinary Arabs, but their Tartar physique proves them to be Poles apart from the true natives of their adopted land.

A Chassidish Dance

I never saw a Jew in Jerusalem without his hat on but once, and it happened thus. On Simchath Torah eve, I paid a visit to the famous Rabbi Judah Leib Diskin. As I entered, I found the Rabbi sitting in an armchair, gazing contemplatively into space. Some of the young men of the Yeshibah were dancing around the room in rollicking fun, each a *pas seul*,

and one of them, with true Oriental hospitality, thought he would honor and gratify me by exchanging his head-covering for mine. True, mine was a somewhat battered straw-hat and his a crown of fur, but all the same I felt rueful and alarmed when he crowned me, and I am afraid my greetings lost in dignity and impressiveness. In fact, I felt somewhat like Gulliver among the Brobdingnagians, when the monkeys patronized him. The style of rejoicing was none the less of great interest. The tune to which they danced, and which in other Chassidish Chevras was evidently the favorite, made a deep impression at the time. A musical friend, the Rev. Francis Cohen, has been good enough to transcribe my now half-faded recollections of the Chassidish howl. He says that the harmonization is not very classical, but "rather like a Chassid's nightmare after a heavy supper off Beethoven." Mr. Cohen's rendering follows on the next page.

I will not be answerable for the consequences, if any fair friend attempts to translate the notes into music, vocal or instrumental. The tune is, I daresay, to be heard in Chassidish communities a thousand miles north of Jerusalem, but there it was evidently the favorite of—well—melodies. Of course, one of the most striking of the peculiarities of the Holy City is the total absence of opportunities for amusement, as a young English resident pathetically complained to me. Perhaps with the assistance of M. Nissim Behar's talented wife, an occasional concert in her drawing-room will in the future be allowed to relieve the gloom, and it would not be surprising if the next English traveller who follows my good example and pays the Jerusalemites a visit has his ears greeted by the

Allegro, molto nasale, sempre staccato.
Ei - yei ei - yei ei - ei - ei - ei - yei,
ei - yei ei - yei ei - ei - ei - ei - yei;
ei - yei ei - yei ei - ei - ei - ei - yei
rit.
ei - yei ei - yei ei - ei - ei - ei - yei

familiar strains of "Dorothy" or Sullivan's incidental music to "Macbeth."

The Rejoicing of the Law

If the tune of the Chassidim is funny, the manner in which they make the Hakafoth, or circuits of the synagogue, during the Rejoicing of the Law, is funnier still. Each bearer of a scroll is surrounded by three or four men who dance slowly, but with evident gusto and superabundant gesticulation, *der Rolle treu, mit lächerlichem Ernst.* It was comical and shocking to see venerable graybeards pirouetting on their toes like some European fairy of the pantomime, but it was highly appreciated, and I had to simulate satisfaction for fear of being rebuked, as Michal was when she objected to King David's "dancing with all his might."

A very good illustration of the esteem in which this religious dancing is held is furnished by a story related of the Kabbalist Isaac Luria, in the Rödelheim edition of the *Maase Buch* published in 1753, and quoted by Dr. Max Grünbaum in his *Jüdisch-deutsche Chrestomathie.* It is related that one Sabbath morning R. Isaac told his disciples that he would show them something very extraordinary if they promised not to laugh, and he warned them that whoever broke his promise would die within the year. They give the required assurances, and the wonder-worker conjures up, from among the spirits of the vasty deep, seven ghosts, whom he calls up to the reading of the Law. Their prototypes in the flesh are no less personages than Aaron the high priest as Cohen, Moses his brother as Levite, and as ordinary Israelites, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The seventh and last

to be called up is King David, and he comes forward jumping and dancing in honor of the Law. One hapless Talmid involuntarily bursts out laughing, and, of course, dies that selfsame year. But the Rabbi himself does not escape scathless, and the very next story relates how he, too, dies soon after, by way of penalty for being too yielding to his pupils' idle curiosity, and too ready to prostitute to an unworthy love of ostentation that talent which it was death to discover, and with which he was endowed for higher purposes.

The late Mr. F. D. Mocatta, himself a great traveller, reminded me that a custom not very unlike the Chassid's celebration of Simchath Torah prevails among the devout Catholics of Seville. During carnival, and also in June and October, a solemn Dancing Mass is celebrated in the cathedral of that lovely city. The officiating sixteen boys ("seises") dance in front of the high altar, with plumed hats on their heads, and dressed as pages of the time of Philip III. They wear red and white for Corpus Christi, blue and white for the festivals of the Virgin. The dance is supposed to imitate that of the Israelites before the Ark of the Covenant. One of the popes, more ascetic than his predecessors, objected to thus exposing the mysteries of the Mass to unseemly revelry, and sought to abolish the custom, but the force of public opinion was stronger than the Head of the Church, and the Dancing Mass at Seville is a solemn institution to this very day.

There was dancing that night throughout Jewry in Jerusalem, and the nicest part of the performance was to see the mothers standing quietly inside the doors of the synagogue, or Chevra, with their little children,

who clapped their hands and ran up to kiss the Scrolls as they passed, and altogether seemed in the seventh heaven of delight. In the great synagogues of the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, the ceremony was grander and more decorous. All the candles were lit, and, *experto crede,* dripped exceedingly. Twenty or thirty Scrolls were taken out of the Ark and carried round the Almemar. There is an immense number of Scrolls in Jerusalem, for the residents are still as famous for their calligraphy as they have been for centuries, and their work is cheap. Every elder of the synagogue who was honored with one seemed to be a Morenu, or ordained Rabbi, and their bright robes and cheerful faces showed that, as Heine sings of the Shabbas, on that day each thought himself as happy as a king, forgetful of the squalor and poverty and pain of the everyday life outside. Many of the little boys waved flags of red, blue, white, or yellow silk or stuff. On one side of these banners were printed the verses sung during the Hakafoth (אנא ה׳ הושיעה נא etc.), and on the other the arms of Sir Moses Montefiore, the champion of Jerusalem, were fully emblazoned with their supporters, a lion and unicorn rampant, and, on a scroll, his motto, "Jerusalem."

The Britzker Rav at Jerusalem

Rabbi Judah Leib Diskin, at whose house I saw the Chassidish dance, cannot be dismissed with the above incidental mention. The JeLeD (child), as he was acrostically called, was, indeed, the child of his time and environment.

Born at the beginning of the century which in a more western city produced a Heine, the Lithuanian

lad was regarded by his Chassidish *entourage* as hardly less marvellous a genius. His aspirations could not be confined within the mud walls of a Russian village. The "Litvak," as the Lithuanian is sometimes in affection, more often contemptuously, called, is a very curious type of Jew, but the Litvak Chassid is more curious and still more redoubtable. There has always been a mystic bent in the Jewish mind, and to this, as Dr. Schechter has shown, Chassidism gives full scope. It is a joyful and emotional sort of religion—not that which appeals to the cold intellect of the Porch, or even to the more excitable reasoning powers of the Forum. But that it has "caught on" need surprise no one who has watched the gigantic march of the Salvation Army.

Diskin soon received a call to Brest-Litovsk, where he became the head and centre of the important Jewish community there—all Misnagdim and pious, more or less. Nowadays Brest is an important railway junction and military garrison, but in his days it was rather "the mother city in Israel" than a commercial or political entity. The "Britzker Rav," however, soon became a well-known figure throughout the Russian and Polish Jewries, and, though his geographical connection with Britzk (the Polish name for Brest) ceased nearly half a century ago, it is as the "Britzker Rav" that he has been proudly designated and revered to an almost sacrilegious point in Jerusalem itself.

When Sir Moses Montefiore made his first pilgrimage to Jerusalem there were only two hundred and fifty Jews there. But their number rapidly increased to many thousands. And as soon as there was a Lit-

vak congregation there worthy of him, they sent for Diskin, and he became their Rabbi. His reputation was ever greater than his performance. Yet this by no means implies that he did not amply deserve his reputation for sanctity of life and Talmudical insight. But so far as I can find he never wrote a book. Steinschneider and Lippe, Zedner and Van Straalen are silent in his regard. Book-making he left to his enemies.

Out of good old-fashioned courtesy to my father's son, he had sent me by way of welcome a gift of cakes and wine. I went to thank him, and found him seated in a long fur robe, with velvet biretta trimmed with fur, whilst round and round the room, as above related, there danced the students of his Yeshibah, a curious mixture of the Howling Dervish and German University student. But the old Rabbi, with the piercing eyes, beamed at them indulgently, and beamed at me, with perhaps a little more indulgence for that I would not, or could not, join in their gyrations, or voice their melodies.

Throughout his long pilgrimage in Jerusalem, and, indeed, almost to the end, the Britzker Rav held religiously aloof from all controversial matters or the war of communal politics, only too prevalent in Jerusalem. It was his boast that he never put pen to paper nor worried about worldly things—he had come to the Holy Land to die there. His wife was, perhaps, a little less old-world in her notions. She is the most distinguished lady in Jerusalem. She can Pasken, I was told, as well as any Rav, writes Hebrew in classical style, and talks a little less classical, but quite as intelligible French.

Diskin's abstention from controversy is, I am sorry to say, quite unparalleled in Jerusalem, and speaks volumes in favor of his wisdom and good nature. Yet, even his aloofness was not quite to the end.

The Russian immigrants into Palestine had started the first of the Kolelim (literally, universities), and initiated the mischievous system of Chalukah. The stay-at-homes remained in close intercourse with their more enterprising brethren abroad, and by way of atonement for their modernity in yielding to the Czar's reforms, sent moneys, city by city, to each of the cities of the "university," and these were distributed amongst the students of Talmud and Torah. The principle is, of course, liable to abuse, but it should not be forgotten that it is the same system as supported learning and kept it alive in Paris and in Oxford, in Cordova and Padua in mediæval times.

The course of Russian persecution had not abated since Diskin had left home, and emigration had not ceased. But it had taken a new direction, and had crossed the Atlantic, and American Russians or Russian Americans had now become almost as numerous as their brothers at home in Russia, and not less charitable. American contributions to Chalukah had become very large and important, and yet by the constitution of the Kolelim could not be diverted from the cities of original origin. And so a miniature little American revolution took place in 1897 in Jerusalem, a Kolél America was formed, and the Britzker Rav consented to be nominated as its head. I fear there was a good deal of ill-feeling aroused. The nonagenarian Chief Rabbi Samuel Salant felt hurt,

and, indeed, was said to contemplate the resignation of his office.

But the Jeled's intervention, though it was probably impersonal, seems a pity. It strikes a discordant note in the harmony of a whole and peaceful life.

The Rothschild School in 1888

During my stay in Jerusalem, not a day passed but I paid my friend M. Nissim Behar a visit in the large and commodious premises of the Baron Lionel de Rothschild School, which immediately adjoins the Hotel Jerusalem. Despite the comfort of my bed, I was awakened almost every morning by the sounds of activity raised by M. Behar's little—and big—scholars. Altogether Jerusalem is a very early place. Everybody is up betimes, and morning prayers—including the Duchan, which in the Holy City is an every-day institution—are always over long before seven. Everybody goes to synagogue in Jerusalem, and manages to do so without encroaching on his task-master's time. It is the greatest mistake in the world to think that our co-religionists there are idle and do no work, and that the Chalukah makes them *rentiers* and gentlemen at ease. Later on I shall take an opportunity to say something about Jewish trades and tradespeople, and also briefly explain the Chalukah system, and show that the ten francs per annum a house-father obtains under it is not so very demoralizing and pernicious after all. At present, I propose to tell about the Rothschild School, not so much because from the theoretical point of view it is the best. The German Orphan Asylum, managed by the estimable Dr. Herzberg, in this respect runs it very close. And the בתי ספר

("Book-Houses"), or Talmud Torah Schools, within the walls of Jerusalem, are also in many respects most creditable. But it is in regard to the technical instruction it imparts and its Director's practical energy that it is altogether unique. For English Jews, it has the additional interest that it was founded by Englishmen—Lord Rothschild and Samuel Montagu—and that it is mainly supported by English funds. The Anglo-Jewish Association gives it an annual subvention, and so does the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Paris, but, of course, the bulk of the cost is defrayed by its own Committee, the headquarters of which are at New Court.

The rather cumbrous title of the school is as follows: "Institution Israélite pour l'Instruction et le Travail: Fondation, Lionel de Rothschild," but its lengthy name has not stood in the way of its material prosperity. Recent advices from the East inform me that the school has been permitted to acquire for a hundred thousand francs the site of the hotel. Mr. Kamiñitz will move nearer the Jaffa Gate, and his guests will no longer have to use the omnibus when they wish to go to the city, nor be disturbed by their industrious but noisy neighbors, nor annoyed by the familiar, though disagreeable, sound of the engine. It is hard to picture to one's self omnibuses and steam engines in Jerusalem, and yet they are prosaic realities introduced by our enterprising brethren, and important factors in the Jerusalem of to-day.

M. Behar has nearly two hundred pupils, of whom a third board at the establishment. There are nearly twice as many Sephardim as Ashkenazim. I was a little sorry to see this, although I feel sure of the

absence of any conscious favoritism. There are more Ashkenazim in Jerusalem than their bluer-blooded co-religionists, and, although they may be less desirable in some respects, I can vouch for their being quite as eager to become pupils. It was quite a sight to see how M. Behar, whenever he walked abroad, was bombarded with applications for admission to his school.

Prayers were always read by the Minyan at half-past five in the morning, and within an hour from that time the classes were all busy, and the workshops alive with the blows of the hammers, and the creaking of the saws, and the puffing of the engine. One can hardly avoid being guilty of rhapsody, when describing the effect produced upon a Western mind by the appearance of Western activity where expectation had pictured to itself Oriental indolence cultivating begging as a fine art. Even in Europe an institution like the Rothschild School would extort admiration. It is more an Academy or University than a school in the narrower sense of the word, and its pupils hail from all parts of Asia Minor and Syria, and some come even from Egypt.

Languages

The curriculum is extensive, but so far as one could judge not so wide as to prevent the instruction given from being quite as thorough as desirable. Hebrew, Arabic, and French are the languages chiefly taught, and the pupils are permitted to converse in any of these, but Jargon, whether Jüdisch-Deutsch or Judæo-Spanish, is strictly forbidden. English is also taught, and, as I understand, by the express desire of the

parents, including amongst others no less a personage than his Excellency the Pasha. English-speaking travellers still constitute the bulk of the moneyed travellers to the Holy Land, and therefore English has a practical value. But in this respect Jerusalem is certainly exceptional, for in the East—and even in Egypt—French remains the *lingua franca*. With regard to French, I can only say that I have never seen a public school boy whose accent or grammar could compare with even the youngest of M. Behar's pupils. Perhaps some persons who know may think this only faint praise after all. And as to Hebrew, I feel sure that the average European Rabbi would be put to the blush by these little scholars of Jerusalem, whose fluency and elegance of diction make us unable to realize that Hebrew is not a living language. Mathematics and the rudiments of science are not neglected, and, indeed, the only point in which higher education in Jerusalem differs from ours is that we indulge our *penchant* for Greek and Latin, and they do not. In some of the *Alliance* schools in Asia Minor, Smyrna, for instance, even this qualification does not apply, so far, at least, as Greek is concerned.

The Workshops

The workshops were highly satisfactory. The Mechanical Engineering Department, under Mr. Price, an able young mechanician, who was sent out to Jerusalem by the Anglo-Jewish Association, looked particularly business-like. It seemed a little strange that the engine was fed by olive wood as fuel. The woodwork and carving were also interesting, the artisans showing great zeal, and seeming to glory in their

work. The tailoring and bootmaking shops were also busily employed. What most struck me, was the fact that the technical classes were not merely, as in the People's Palace for instance, for the purposes of education. They were also to a great extent self-supporting, and were largely patronized by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Indeed, complaints were made to me by a deputation of artisans in the city that they were being undersold by the school. I investigated the matter, and found that, so far from this being the fact, the school really exacted and obtained higher than the average price for its work. I saw iron bedsteads being manufactured, wheels of carts mended, the familiar olive-wood curiosities being turned, and boots and clothes being made, all to order and for remunerative prices. With regard to the latter trades, it should be observed that they are not open to the same objections as in England. Jerusalem has practically no export trade, and its artisans must therefore supply home wants. The population is increasing, and there is already a fair field for the employment of all those who are being trained.

The classes most particularly interesting were those for drawing and sculpture—the latter recently endowed by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, whose visit to Palestine, with the Baroness, last year was epoch-making. Here one saw work which evinced a large amount of talent and creative skill—work which would not have disgraced South Kensington. Among the most artistic workers in stone were some Russian refugees, of whom there are several in the school. Two of these pupils, Berschawsky and Lemberg, I found hard at work in the city, in the Via Dolorosa, carving the corbels of the

Russian Convent buildings, which were soon to be opened by the Archdukes Paul and Sergius. It seemed grim irony of fate that the authorities of the Greek Church, despite their known anti-Semitic prejudices, should have been forced to call in the aid of the very men whom persecution had compelled to flee from the dominions of the Princes' brother, but who were the only persons in Jerusalem who could do artistic work of the character required. Happily other and more merciful counsels now prevail, and the Governors of the various Russian Provinces have received written instructions from St. Petersburg to stay their hand.

The Pupils

With regard to the *locale* of the School, it is essentially the right thing in the right place. On the Jaffa Road, about ten or twelve minutes' walk from the Gate, it is the first conspicuous building passed by every pilgrim to the Holy City. It is not too far from the city to prevent the young inhabitants from availing themselves of its advantages, and, so far as I could ascertain, they are never kept by distance from being either punctual or regular. Above all, it is in the centre of the new Jerusalem without the walls, which is rapidly springing up, and which relieves the pressure within. There are already about eight or nine thousand suburban inhabitants. The pupils are of various ages and various sects of religious thought, and, to my mind, nothing will serve better than this mixture to remove the bitterness of the *odium theologicum*, which is so unwelcome a feature in the Holy City. As in the great Universities of the middle ages, there are fathers of families there who think it no disgrace to join the

classes. Thus, a staid notary of Islam, before whom I had one afternoon to appear in the Serail to get him to legalize a power of attorney, I found next morning seated on the school-boy's bench learning French. Of course, the large majority—especially in the theoretical classes—are young. Among them is Osman Bey, the son of Reouf Pasha, the Governor of Palestine. His

TYPES OF JEWISH SCHOOL CHILDREN

standard of cultivation may be gauged by the fact that he plays Madame Behar's piano and is an enthusiastic collector of coins. He was delighted with the gift of a Roman sesterce I had picked up near the Step Pyramid of Sakhara. Sephardim and Ashkenazim meet on a footing of complete equality, and there are several Christian, and more Mohammedan pupils. As none of the Jews are in a position to pay, M. Behar cannot

exact payment from the non-Jews, but I believe some of the Christians have volunteered payment. Their number is, of course, relatively very small.

When in Jerusalem I was especially struck by the cordial relations now existing between the Rabbis and M. Behar, whose conduct has converted their former distrust into confidence. It is also a pleasing feature in the schools that just as they draw their material, not only from Jerusalem, but also from Hebron and the Agricultural Colonies, so their scholars, when trained, do not all remain to stagnate there, but go afield to other parts of Palestine, to Syria, and even to Egypt. The school premises are admirably adapted for their purpose, but every inch of space is occupied, and if, as I hope, provision will be made eventually for the board and lodging of some of the country pupils, the proposed extension will have become necessary.

The Orphan School and Others

The Waisenhaus, or Orphan Asylum, on the Jaffa Road, directed by Dr. Herzberg, is a most creditable institution. It is the only Jewish Boarding School in Jerusalem and is thoroughly well managed. I was sorry to miss Dr. Herzberg, who was in Europe at the time of my visit. He is a man in a thousand, as his writings testify, and one whom we must be proud to call our co-religionist. His wife is a second mother to the pupils, and they evidently love her dearly. I went there on Saturday, so did not find them at their studies, but the bedrooms were nice and airy, with whitewashed walls and ceiling, and not crowded like the dormitories of our own public schools. In general, one cannot give a very good account of the climate of Jerusalem.

But that, as I shall show later, its shortcomings are remediable appears from the fact that, except in the rainy season, the teacher, Mr. Cohen, who was trained at Jews' College (London), and therefore acclimatized in this country, manages to sleep in the open air on the leads outside one of the rooms. The pupils learn English, German, and Arabic, but no French. This seems a pity, for, although French may not be indispensable, German is quite useless.

An evening school for the young artisans of Jerusalem has just been started in Jerusalem in connection with Dr. Herzberg's school, and it is very successful.

The Blumenthal School accommodates about a hundred pupils. It is directed by Rabbi Isaac Prager, and of his pupils' Hebrew and Arabic calligraphy I carried away some lovely specimens. I can only just refer to the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Talmud Torah Schools, each with its three hundred pupils. The latter is under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi Samuel Salant, who bears his years lightly, and who struck me as particularly clever. Here I found the only trace of Pharisaism which I met in the course of my visit, and even this was of the mildest possible type. We came to a class where a boy was translating, or rather reciting a passage out of פרק חלק in the Treatise Sanhedrin. I asked him to turn over, in the famous introduction by Maimonides, to that chapter in which he deals with the various theories of the after-life. The teacher hesitated and elevated his eyebrows. I saw that he did not feel satisfied in his own mind as to the orthodoxy of the Rambam's philosophy, and, snubbed, I withdrew.

Besides these, there are many Talmud Torah and other schools for Jewish children in Jerusalem—over

eighty for boys and about twenty for girls. With the exception of the Evelina Rothschild School for girls, none of these are intended for more than forty pupils, and most have not even half that number. They are in fact like the Chedarim in Whitechapel or any other Ghetto, and it is to be feared that in most cases their instruction is limited to parrot-like reading of the Hebrew Scriptures and prayer book.

Climate and Sanitation

The awfully sudden death of the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria will be deeply felt by our Jewish brethren in Palestine. He visited the Holy Land when only nineteen years old, and his "Journey in the East," published in 1884, bears testimony to the extreme interest he took in Jews, and the cordial goodwill he bore them. When in Jerusalem he was present at the Seder given by the late Chacham Bashi, and the ceremony made a deep impression upon him. As a memento of the hospitality he had enjoyed, he presented the venerable Rabbi with his portrait and autograph, and the picture was treasured by him as one of his dearest possessions. On board ship I met a man, now in the employ of the Austrian Consul at Beyrout, who had accompanied the Prince as *Jäger,* or body-servant, during his travels in the East. He told me many a story of his Imperial master's reverent interest in the holy places, and of his invariable good humor in difficulties and disagreeables. Although so active a sportsman, he suffered in health when in Palestine. He was struck down by fever while on his way to Nazareth, and to his great

disappointment was obliged to embark at Haifa without completing his programme.

From various causes the death-rate at Jerusalem is, to European notions, abnormally high. It is not by any means an unhealthy place for visitors, far less so, for instance, than Rome, and if they stay outside the city walls they may escape even the mosquitoes.

But the residents are great sufferers; hardly anybody escapes fever once or twice a year; ophthalmia is caused by the glare of the sun against the white stone walls, and the chilly mornings and evenings are accountable for a good deal of rheumatism. Even the Talmud refers to the delicate health of Jerusalemite children as notorious, and it would appear to be still worse nowadays. It is particularly painful to see the puny and wizened babies, and boys, and girls, sharp and clever but looking prematurely old. The offspring of too early marriages is always sickly, but the chief causes of the ill-health are the poorness of the water supply and absence—or rather presence—of drainage. Both defects could be remedied without much difficulty.

As to the drainage, the cesspool system could, one would think, be easily replaced by canalization. The valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom ("Gehenna," the traditional limbo of the damned) are no longer so deep as they used to be in the days of yore. The numerous layers of *débris* now enable one standing in the valley to touch with an umbrella Robinson's Arch, the starting point of the famous bridge which connected the Temple with the Mount of Olives. And yet Josephus tells us that the depth was so great that no one could stand on the bridge and look down without be-

coming giddy and afraid. Still the fall from the inhabited heights to the natural moat surrounding the city is large enough to be of use for drainage purposes. The Dung Gate—the שער האשפות—with its now blocked-up cloaca, leading to the altar in the Temple courtyard, is sufficiently near to show that such methods of sanitation were not unknown to King Solomon three thousand years ago, and the Turks have much to do to make up for the ground they have lost since then.

Underground Jerusalem

To my mind the most wonderful object in Palestine is underground Jerusalem. This is formed by the royal quarries cut in the solid sandstone rock, whence Solomon obtained the massive stones of his Temple, and whence the material was brought with which a new Jerusalem was built fourteen separate times. They are of huge extent, and form a network of long and wide but intricate galleries with which the rock is honeycombed. The labyrinth is entered by a narrow passage near the Damascus Gate. Formerly it was left open to anybody who chose to enter, and the maze to which it led was inhabited by gipsies—even in Jerusalem there are gipsies—and other vagabonds. Jerusalem is a garrison city, and the military element there, as elsewhere, often gets into mischief. Many a disreputable scene was enacted underground, while official negligence shrugged its shoulders and let it pass. But even Turkish indifferentism was moved from its accustomed equanimity when dynamite was discovered under the Serail. The danger of a real blowing up, by European methods, was more potent

than the reproach of Europeans, and the Augean stable was straightway cleansed and emptied. It has been empty ever since, the entrance is always barred and locked, and the keys are forthcoming only in exchange for *bakhshish.*

There were five of us who entered, each with a burning candle, and in solemn silence we followed our guide as he led us down a slippery incline, far away to beneath the very site of the Temple. The transition from the noise and the glare and the dust outside was very impressive. No catacombs could appear so much a city of the dead as these immense quarries which undermine all Jerusalem. One could trace the marks of pick-axes on the rocks all around, and gradually realize what an immense amount of labor was involved in thus hollowing out Mount Zion and the other sacred hills. Here at last one could think and live through our history once again. In Jerusalem itself one is too much distracted by the importunities of dragomans and the innumerable sights to be seen. And even here our day-dreams were soon rudely broken. All at once our guide discovered that he had lost his way, and we had to blow out all our candles but one, so as to economize our light in case we might have to spend many hours before finding our way out. Luckily even this adventure ended in a commonplace manner, and the sound of trickling water put us on the right track once more. We found large ponds of water, like the subterranean lakes in a salt mine, only the water was not briny, but fresh and sweet. Evidently it is here that one should seek for the springs that supplied Jerusalem in its halcyon days, and fed the famous pool of Siloam. Even now,

there is an endless quantity of water in underground Jerusalem, and it would cost but a small sum, thirty thousand pounds or so, to make a permanent water supply. Some years ago Lady Burdett-Coutts offered to defray the cost out of her own pocket, but political motives, or possibly carelessness, induced the Turks to decline her noble offer. However, the present Pasha told us that should such an offer be repeated under his *régime,* he would gratefully accept it.[2]

Hospitals

However easy it may be to improve the health conditions of Jerusalem, its unhealthiness is the unfortunate fact of to-day. Hence the number of its hospitals. There are no less than eleven, besides four dispensaries. Of these, the largest is the Russian hospital, with seventy-five beds.

Practically, each nation and, indeed, denomination has a hospital of its own—English, American, Greek, German, and so on. The Leper's Home of the Herrnhuter Brethren, with twenty-three beds, is a gruesome link with the past. But we Jews are particularly interested in four[3] institutions: the new Rothschild Hospital *extra muros;* the Bikkur Cholim (בקור חולים)

[2] The late Sir Edward Lechmere subsequently obtained an *iradé* from the Sultan authorizing the establishment of water works, and formed a committee, of which the writer was one of the members, but through local opposition the scheme came to naught.

[3] Since this was written, a handsome building has been erected by subscription, chiefly of Amsterdam and Frankfort Jews, at the extreme west of the Jaffa suburb. This is the fifth and largest of the Jewish hospitals at Jerusalem.

[See page 72]

NEW HOSPITAL AT JERUSALEM

Hospital of the Ashkenazim; the Misgab Ladach (משגב לדך) of the Sephardim; and the English Mission Hospital for the Jews. The new hospital, about ten minutes' walk outside the Jaffa Gate, is a really beautiful building, fitted with all modern improvements. It stands in the best situation for air, drainage, and water that could be found within an hour's radius of Jerusalem. It is surrounded by an open space of about twelve acres, which is partly to be planted with Eucalyptus trees, and partly to be converted into a fruit and flower garden. To English ideas, the cost of erection, sixty-eight thousand francs, seems ridiculously small. The land was bought about six years ago for thirty thousand francs, but it has, since then, much increased in value. In fact, since the building has been finished, the French Consul, who was the original vendor of the land, in vain offered to buy it back again for one hundred and forty-eight thousand francs. It has space for fifty-two beds, or even more. Every regard seems to have been taken about Kashruth, and the Shool with its three fine Scrolls would be a credit to the most orthodox. All the registers, patients' cards, prescriptions, labels, etc., are printed in Hebrew. It is entirely supported by the munificence of the Rothschild family, and Baron Alphonse has given particular instructions that it is to be conducted quite *selon les règles* of the Shulchan Aruch.

Doctor d'Arbela

The managing physician is Dr. Israel Gregory d'Arbela, who is a veritable Jewish hero of romance. He was born in Russia, studied in the Imperial Military Medical School of St. Petersburg, and afterwards

at the University of Rome, of which he is an M. D. During his seven years' military service he was wounded on the battlefield, and is one of the few Russian Jews decorated by the Czar for personal gallantry. He spent a short time at Cairo, where the Khedive made him a Bey; has been in India, and in Natal, where he practiced as a physician for a year. For seven years, from 1880, he lived in Zanzibar, with the rank of a general, surgeon-major of the Sultan's army, and his private physician. In that capacity he was able to do much for the advancement of civilization, and rendered good service to British interests, as Sir John Kirk has testified. He vaccinated all the dusky members of Stanley's following when that adventurous traveller started on his last journey into the interior of Africa, and was the last European to bid him farewell. The great explorer confided to him that he had other objects in view, besides that of relieving Emin Bey. Accordingly, in October, 1888, the doctor could assure me that Stanley was safe, when everybody else gave him up for lost. D'Arbela has seven or eight decorations from various European sovereigns, and his inlaid guns and diamond hilted sword are a sight to see. He is a man of means, and the primary object which prompted him to settle in the Holy Land was his desire to assist in the ישוב ארץ ישראל, and to give his dear little girl and boy a Jewish education. His dark bright-eyed little daughter is sweetly pretty, and speaks English with charming shyness. She is only seven, but has already made a conquest! The doctor takes much interest in his agricultural colonies, and has a considerable pecuniary stake in them. He owns half-

a-million vines in the Rishon colony, and has a profound belief in its future. A brother of his is an artillery engineer in the Russian army; but rather than continue in the service and give up Judaism, as the authorities require him to do, he is going out to Palestine, and will manage his brother's vineyard. Dr. d'Arbela may not be scrupulously observant, according to Jewish notions, but he never eats Trefa, nor smokes on Sabbath. He is a handsome, active man, and though he mourns for the wife he has lost, he is too much of an idealist or an enthusiast to be anything but the most agreeable and refreshing of companions.

It is no doubt, in some respects, a disadvantage that the new Rothschild Hospital is not inside the town, as the old one was. The bulk of the community lives, of course, within the walls, but there are already three thousand Jews or more who live outside, within five minutes' walk of the hospital, and there is every prospect that any future increase in the Jewish community will be precisely in this neighborhood. Indeed, the special object of my journey was to arrange for the development, by building societies, of the Montefiore estate, which is in the immediate vicinity of the hospital. The plan, if successfully carried out, will lead to the provision of dwellings for a thousand more of our co-religionists. On the whole, except for very serious cases, there will be no difficulty in bringing patients from the very furthest part of the town to this new suburban site. In the palmiest days of its history, it was never more than twenty-five minutes' walk from end to end of Jerusalem, so that the objections to an institution outside the city walls must not be exaggerated.

The Missionaries

The Missionary Hospital, which accommodates twenty-eight indoor patients, is inside the city, and its object, ever since 1842, when it was established, is, admittedly, to attract Jews, and Jews only, and to seduce, if not coerce, them into Christianity. As Jews, we have the duty to do all in our power to combat the insidious influence of the missionaries, and so the hospital accommodation we should be ready to provide should equal the demand, without regard to the Rothschild Hospital outside the city. Now, the only existing provision is that furnished by the Bikkur Cholim, which has thirty beds, and to which an upper story has just been added by the liberality of one Mr. Wittenberg, a resident in Jerusalem. This is not enough, if we have regard to the fact that hospital cases are drafted to Jerusalem from Hebron, Nablous, Safed, and Tiberias. Those from the Colonies, whose Jewish population is now close upon four thousand, and those from Jaffa with its fifteen hundred Jews, will probably go to the new hospital.

The only available city site for a new hospital is that of the old Rothschild Hospital, and this has been recently sold to the Sephardi community for twenty thousand francs, a third part of its value, on condition that it should be applied only for the communal benefit. The intention is to erect on it a hospital for the Sephardi Friendly Society, called Misgab Ladach, and manage it on the same lines as the Bikkur Cholim, the sister institution for the Ashkenazim. The Sephardim scraped together ten thousand francs among themselves, and have sought a loan of the rest from the Sir Moses Montefiore Testimonial Committee. Mean-

time the banker, Signor Valero, has advanced the money. Now, there is a fund amounting to about nine thousand pounds collected by our co-religionists in Frankfort and Amsterdam for the express object of founding and endowing a hospital in Jerusalem. They acquired a piece of land, but, as they could not obtain the Pasha's concession to build a hospital on it, they had to sell the ground they had bought.[4] It would, therefore, be eminently desirable if they would apply the funds in enlarging, improving, and Europeanizing the Bikkur Cholim and the Misgab Ladach. They would thus be enabled to supply the existing want, without multiplying institutions or wasting the expenses of a new installation. On my way home to England, I attended a meeting of the committee at Frankfort, and advocated this view. Our Dutch and German co-religionists are very practical, and I was confident that the commonsense view of the matter would appeal to them, even though it might involve some small sacrifice of effect.

Competent persons think the site of the old Rothschild Hospital as suitable as any inside Jerusalem. It overlooks the "Dome of the Rock" and the Harâmesh Sherif generally, as well as the Mount of Olives, and is on the edge of the cliff overhanging the Brook of Kedron at the height of at least two hundred feet. The situation is a grand one, but certainly not so healthy as one outside the gates. At present it is a building of only one story; but it has splendid tanks and good water, which did not run dry even during this last year of drought; but occasionally the purchase

[4] The hospital has since been erected on an admirable site at the west end of the Jaffa Road.

of water might become necessary. Like all Jerusalem houses, it is built of stone, and has a dome-shaped roof. Indeed, the countless little domes which stud the city give it a curiously characteristic appearance—something like a collection of white bee-hives or hen-coops. A few houses have flat roofs; but even they conceal a cupola, so that the vaulted rooms are always cool, even in the height of summer. The rooms vary in height, and are arranged without much regard to uniformity; the passages are always exposed to the open air, so that in the rainy season—and in November and December last there seems to have been an abnormal amount of rain—living is rather uncomfortable. However, such as it is, the place after being closed for about seven weeks—when the removal to the Jaffa Road was made—was re-opened on Wednesday, the 27th of Tishri, 1888, by the Misgab Ladach, and the Society was good enough to invite me to attend the inauguration. The invitation was printed on a neat little white card and, of course, in Hebrew. The hour fixed was nine o'clock, but as time is a variable quantity in Jerusalem, it was a matter of some little calculation to make out that this corresponded to about two in the afternoon.

Clocks

It is not a little puzzling to find the clocks striking all hours at all times in Jerusalem, so that in that city something like Jules Verne's famous solecism of Big Ben striking twenty minutes to seven could easily be realized. Every ecclesiastical building possesses its own clock, and not only do they not "go just alike," but they all differ widely and wilfully, so that it seems

that clerical disputes are allowed to affect the chronology of every day. I always made my appointments by Frankish time, but an hour's margin was invariably necessary! A couple of American timekeepers bestowed upon Mr. Kaminitz's bright and obliging sons and henchmen, Bezaleel and Marcus, will, perhaps, do a little to punctualize their environment. This is not meant to imply that at their own home and hotel their father, or rather their mother, kept the guests waiting for lunch at one, or dinner at seven. *Au contraire,* the best clock seems to be that we carry within us, and judging by the impartial evidence of the stomach, we can vouch for their punctuality. Our *table d'hôte* was always good and plentiful, and it was not without something of a "rush" that I managed to get to the Misgab Ladach gathering in time for the ceremony.

A Meeting

The meeting provided further proof of the cordial relations subsisting between the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim, which were as conspicuous as gratifying. The venerable and handsome Chacham Bashi Panizel, the "First in Zion," as he is called, was there, with his delegate,[5] Har Behar Eliashar, and next to them sat the Reverend Samuel Salant, Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazim. Many of the physicians of the city were present, and the lay element was represented by Messrs. Valero, Behar, Pines, and others. The proceedings consisted of a long address in classical Hebrew delivered by Mr. Menahem Cohen, the Treasurer of the Society, and various complimentary speeches, as the custom is on such occasions all the world over.

[5] And afterwards his successor.

The morning's mail had brought *The Jewish Chronicle,* announcing that Major Goldsmid had obtained his "step." The gallant Colonel is a great favorite in Jerusalem, and it was quite charming to see the Chacham Bashi's face light up as I explained to him that the promotion was equivalent to the conversion of a Bey into a Pasha!

Tombs

Until one goes to the Holy Land, one cannot realize how numerous are the objects which demand attention. The first impression of the smallness of the country soon wears off when one begins to understand how rich it is in association. To the Jew this is specially noticeable. For myself, I frankly admit that the specifically Christological monuments had comparatively little interest; not that, as a rule, I care for them less, but because I care for our own, our very own, antiquities more. Every inch of the sacred soil is so bound up with our history during and after Bible times, that like the literary ignoramus who found fault with "Hamlet" because it was so full of quotations, I could hardly help thinking the crowding of "effects," the *toujours perdrix* of sightseeing, quite theatrical. I despair of giving an impression at all accurate of the things seen and to be seen. Take, for instance, the case of sepulchral monuments. We all know that, throughout our history, we Jews have deemed it a high privilege to be buried in the Holy Land, and therefore it is not surprising that Palestine in general, and the God's-acre at the foot of the Mount of Olives in particular, form a veritable Pantheon of Jewish worthies. As I write, I have before me a catalogue of not less than

two hundred and ninety patriarchs, prophets, and rabbis whose tombs have been identified, and the anniversaries of whose death are celebrated to this day by our co-religionists, who dwell on this the largest *campo santo* in the world. The list is confessedly incomplete, and yet I can only refer to two or three of them, and to those but slightly.

King David's Sepulchre

Of Jewish sepulchres at Jerusalem, that of King David is, of course, of chief interest to everybody, although from the architectural view it is absolutely featureless. It lies to the southwest of Mount Zion, about eight minutes' walk outside the Bethlehem Gate. A small mosque and two or three white-domed Mohammedan buildings cover the site, and constitute a little village called the Neby Dâûb. For half a piastre, if one is a native, for five piastres, if a tourist, one can enter a room on the first floor in which a sarcophagus is shown. This the custodians assert to be the veritable coffin of the Warrior King, and it is, indeed, covered with costly carpets and countless little rags, deposited there by devout Moslem pilgrims. They always thus honor the tombs of their saints, and leave a shred of their clothing, as a European might leave a visiting card, to remind the holy defunct to intercede for them in Heaven. The Mohammedans of Jerusalem will not see the absurdity of expecting travellers to believe that the King can be buried on an upper story, but the Pasha knows very well that the real tomb is in the vault beneath, cut in the solid rock. Admission to this vault is absolutely forbidden; it is regarded

as even more sacred than the Cave of Machpelah, and when the Austrian Crown Prince received a personal firman from the Sultan authorizing him to enter, he had to unlock the gates himself, and even the Pasha, albeit a Governor of the land, with power of life and death, dared not accompany him, because his name was not included in the Imperial warrant.

Catacombs

The catacombs, which the guide books call the "Tombs of the Kings," are really the burial places of Calba Sabbua and his family. Readers of Dr. Richardson's "Son of a Star" will recognize in this man the almost princely father-in-law of Rabbi Akiba. The tombs consist of three square rock chambers with shelves all round, on which traces of richly carved sarcophagi still remain. They lie about five minutes to the north of the Jaffa Road, near what the Arabs are pleased to call the "Tower of Goliath" (Kalât Jâlûd). The whole terrain was purchased by our co-religionist, Madame Pereire, in 1867, and by her presented to the Empire of France, as the Hebrew inscription on the southeast (the largest) chamber testifies. A good many authorities insist, but I think without sufficient reason, that this is the place of burial of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, whose conversion to Judaism, with her son and successor, in 48, constitutes one of the most charming episodes in the romance of Jewish history. During the excavations made in 1867, and again in 1880, several bones were disturbed, and these were, on each occasion, reverently collected and buried by our people with much pomp. I refer to only one other of these "stones crying

out," and then pass—reluctantly—to the Jerusalem of to-day. The Cave of Jeremiah is another of those places where the consensus of opinion of Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, who, despite the independence of their several traditions, concur in treating them as sacred, gives powerful evidence of the truth of revealed religion. Near the mouth of the cavern bloom some of the few fruit trees which are left to remind one of the fertility of the Jerusalem of the past.

The place itself I can allow the traveller Henry Maundrell to describe in his own words, the more so as the quotation contains the only reference to Jews the worthy chaplain makes in his whole description of the "Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem," which he undertook in 1696. He calls it "a large grot a little without Damascus Gate, which is said to have been the residence of Jeremiah, and here they showed us the Prophet's Bed, being a shelve on the Rock about eight foot from the ground, and near it is the place where they say he wrote his Lamentations. This place is now a college of Dervises, and is much honored by Turks and Jews."

Dervishes

The Turks, for all their laziness and sensuality, are distinguished by the profound respect they pay to religion, by their dignified demeanor, and by their temperance. With regard to religious matters, I was particularly struck by the solemnity of the Howling Dervishes, despite the grotesqueness of their performance. In Mohammedan countries the priestly office is not confined to a caste, and any tradesman may become a

Dervish on high days and festivals without detriment to either his weekday business or reputation. Abunâji, though Sheikh of the great Mosque of Omar, is none the less a shrewd merchant of Jerusalem. He sends his son to the school of Nissim Behar, to whom both he and his son are much attached. On Friday, the 28th September, 1888, the lad persuaded his father to have the howling "Zikr" at home and not in the Mosque, so that we and other Giaours might witness it. To my intense astonishment no objection was made to this, and we were able to see the mystic circling and hear the monotonous ejaculations of Allah! Allah! from the vantage point of the roof of an outhouse, while the Dervishes occupied the courts below. The ceremony differed from that of either the "howling" or "dancing" at Constantinople and Cairo, but its wild, weird movements have been too often described to require repetition. What most struck me was the "prentice" system by which quite little boys were permitted to join the circle and imitate their elders, and the *sang-froid* with which Dr. d'Arbela watched the epileptic stupor of a tall Nubian, who had been particularly energetic in his zeal and in whom I recognized the porter of the Rothschild School. The comic side of the matter was even more pronounced than in the case of the Chassidish dancers, but though one may have smiled, laughter is not tabooed in Jerusalem, and the irresistible humor of the situation did not and does not prevent one from appreciating the pathos of their devotion and admiring their sincerity.

SYNAGOGUES

Of the synagogues, reference has already been made to the large Sephardi synagogue, קהל ציון, built so long ago as 1556, and the בית יעקב, the Great Shool of the Ashkenazim, built just twenty-five years ago. Larger than either of these is the Chassidim synagogue, תפארת ישראל, built in memory of Rabbi Israel of Rosen and Rabbi Nissim Bak. The Syrians, the Caucasians (גרוזעם from "Gruria" or "Georgia"), the Thessalonicans, and so on, have each their own place of worship, so that reckoning the Houses of Study (בתי מדרש) there are over sixty synagogues in the Holy City. One of the most curious is the tiny little synagogue in the Karaite quarter, in which one is credibly informed that they never have Minyan. About three families live here and provide for all the Karaite pilgrims, of whom many come from Egypt and the Crimea in the course of the year. The names of several hundred such pilgrims are written, "for a memorial," on the white walls of the little square, or *cul-de-sac,* round which the little Karaite houses are built. I also saw rudely painted on the wall what was less pleasing, the open red hand with which the superstitious Oriental wards off the "evil eye." Manasseh ben Israel has a curious explanation of the origin of this, anything but Jewish, symbol, which belongs to the mysteries of folklore. The Karaite inhabitants seem to think that they are under a curse in Jerusalem, and that their numbers will never comprise ten men. They are shunned by the other Jews. Their synagogue is at least two hundred years old.

The Chalukah System

And now a word as to the famous Chalukah system. All moneys which are sent to Jerusalem by the benevolent for general objects are paid by the Rabbis and Treasurers into two common funds, one for the Sephardim and one for the Ashkenazim. The Sephardi theory is that contributions are sent by way of bursaries, as a premium upon learning, and the money is distributed on this basis, and even well-to-do persons accept it lest a slur might be deemed to be cast upon their wisdom. I know of only two exceptions, and one of these used to be like the rest, till his European friends shamed him out of it. No one but the Talmid Chacham is supposed to be entitled to a share in the Chalukah, but a proportion of the fund is set apart for communal purposes and schools. The fund is regarded very much like a university endowment in England. Such a fellowship is obtained by election and by intellectual qualifications, not of a very exhaustive or exhausting kind, perhaps, but certainly not inferior to the composition of Greek and Latin verses or the solution of mathematical puzzles, which used to be the only "open-sesame" at Oxford or Cambridge, and are still the English high roads to advancement in life, social or political.

The Ashkenazim, however, retain the theory that the Chalukah is intended as a subvention for the poor, but the practical difference between the two views is not very great. Most people are scholars in Jerusalem, but certainly all are poor, and in this respect the analogy of the mediæval university still applies. As I said before, all contributions are ear-marked according to

their place of origin, and divided among the fellow-countrymen of the contributors. For this purpose the Ashkenazim are divided into eight Kolelim, or "classes" (literally, universities). Each member of the כולל הו"ד (*Holland und Deutschland*), for instance, receives two hundred and fifty francs per annum, but these are so well paid only because they are so few that they can be counted with the fingers. The Hungarians get one hundred and fifty francs; while the men of Warsaw get forty, and those of Pinsk no more than seven francs a year. But however small the income thus obtained may be, there is a certain amount of regularity about it, which makes it especially appreciated. Unfortunately, it is just this element of regularity that enables the recipients to hypothecate or alienate it in advance and thus deprive themselves of all practical benefit therefrom as an aid to their maintenance. Rents in Jerusalem are not high, five or six Napoleons per annum for the average-sized house, but they have always to be paid in advance, and to provide this the Chalukah is often sold three or four years in advance. The system is, of course, pernicious, but it is gradually dying a natural death, and the amount of this unearned increment becomes more and more insignificant every year. Many reasons combine to bring this about. The number of the recipients increases very largely, and the amount of the contributions has decreased in even greater proportions, partly owing to Russian troubles and partly to the specialization of gifts for particular objects, such as schools and hospitals. It would be cruel and injudicious to stop the Chalukah suddenly, and therefore the new Society, called "Lemaan Zion," though started under high auspices in Germany, is not

likely to succeed in its abolition, and the storm of protest it has raised in Jerusalem is really neither surprising nor unjustifiable.

Jewish Artisans

There are a goodly number of Jewish trades in Jerusalem, as can perhaps be best evidenced by the medical statistics with respect to the out-door patients of the Rothschild Hospital for the year 1886. In a list of one hundred and sixty-five patients, thirty-four distinct trades are represented: bakers, bookbinders, braziers, clerks, cobblers, cooks, colporteurs, day-laborers, dyers, goldsmiths, hatters, joiners, lithographers, locksmiths, mattress-makers, merchants, millers, nurses, printers, polishers, sculptors, tailors, tinkers, turners, tanners, watchmakers, and so on.

Of course, there are many unemployed. Some can't find work and others are too old. The longevity of some of the inhabitants is surprising. Many persons, mostly from Russia and Roumania, stint themselves all their lives, so as to scrape together a little money to take them in their old age to Palestine, and support them till they die there. Several instances were pointed out to me of feeble veterans who had reached the Holy City seemingly at death's door. The change of climate and mode of life, perhaps their spiritual exaltation, had made them hale and hearty and almost young again.

THE ENVIRONS OF JERUSALEM

The Tomb of Rachel — Pilgrims — Reouf Pasha — Prayers at Rachel's Tomb — Bethlehem — The Cave of Adullam — Artâs.

The Tomb of Rachel

Rachel's Tomb is probably one of the most genuine of the many places of historical note near Jerusalem. Yet even its authenticity has been disputed. Many a modern critic, being a *Geist der stets verneint*, thinks that Rachel was buried to the north of Jerusalem, and not to the south, on the right of the road to Bethlehem. In this, he is merely repeating a Talmudical controversy between the Minim, or early Christians, and the Jews. Such scepticism, however, is like its own vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself, and falls upon the other. The weight of authority is in favor of tradition this time, and even Robinson accepts the traditional tomb as the genuine one. Throughout historical times, Jew, Christian, and Saracen have revered the spot as sacred to the memory of their common mother, the most womanly and the most tender of all the Bible characters. The only practical difficulty which makes against the identification of this locality is the passage in I Samuel x. 2, where the Prophet tells Saul, his future king, that he will "find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah." It has been urged, and is no doubt true, that the boundary between the territories of Judah and Benjamin could not have passed this way.

The difficulty, however, has been satisfactorily solved by Baurath Schick, the clever German architect, whose wonderful model of the Temple makes his house near the new Rothschild Hospital, just outside the Jaffa Gate, one of the show places of Jerusalem. Herr Schick lectured on the subject before the local "German Society," in October, 1878, and his paper is printed in the first (the 1881) volume of Luncz's valuable Jerusalem Annual. Mr. Luncz is himself one of the most interesting and praiseworthy of the Jewish residents of Palestine—one of those men who forbid us to despair of the future progress and improvement of our brethren there. He is totally blind, but his energy is inexhaustible, his temper unsoured, and his literary work of considerable merit. In all probability, there were two monuments bearing Rachel's name. The real one was in Judah, and is that which I am now describing. The other was a cenotaph, like Absalom's Tomb. It is, of course, identical with the pillar in the "king's dale" (i. e., the Valley of Jehoshaphat), which he reared up for himself in his lifetime; for, he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day Absalom's place." Rachel's cenotaph was, probably, a monument erected by the Benjamites in memory of their ancestress, upon their own land, near the border, and on a spot whence the real sepulchre could be seen. Anyhow, nowadays it is only the latter which is known and venerated. Pilgrims of all creeds hold it in esteem, but it is most patronized by our co-religionists.

Pilgrims

Jews, I am sorry to say, do not constitute even a fifteenth part of the seven or eight thousand "Hadjis" who annually visit the Holy City; and of the five hundred or so who do go there, I, as an Ashkenazi, am sorry to say that the very large majority are Sephardim. Curiously enough, a great proportion come from the Caucasus; and, indeed, this only strengthens the sense of Russian propaganda, the leading political impression, which forces itself upon every traveller in the Sultan's dominions. More than a fourth of the total number of pilgrims to Palestine are Russian. The Orthodox Church wishes to make Jerusalem the Rome of Greek Catholicism, and its Patriarch, the dignified Jerotheus, its Pope. Every acre of land in the market seems to be bought by Russian gold. Almost all the new buildings of note are Russian, even to the unsightly bell-tower on the Mount of Olives, which dominates and deafens Jerusalem, and can be seen from the distant, desolate, depressed, and depressing shores of the Dead Sea. Russian interest or interference in the holy places could not be better exemplified than by the visit of the Imperial Archdukes whose arrival was being expected during my stay in Palestine. In their honor and for their comfort, all was bustle and confusion. It is no figure of speech to say that their path was smoothed for them. The Jaffa Road was made passable, and a new carriage road to Hebron was finished actually before the contract time, so as to be ready for their royal progress. The late Baron de Hirsch was profoundly impressed by the belief that Palestine was

destined to fall into the hands of Russia. And it was this, and this alone, as he himself assured me, that led him to fix upon Argentina, rather than the Holy Land, as the scene of his great experiment in Jewish agriculture.

Reouf Pasha

The real credit for the great development of engineering activity, which is making Palestine easy and delightful to travel in, is due to the enlightened policy of the Governor of Palestine, Reouf Pasha. His Excellency, to whom I had a letter of introduction from a personal friend, who was a fellow-student of his in Paris, received me most amiably on the half-a-dozen occasions or so on which I interviewed him. He is a tall man with a long gray beard, and, despite his thoughtful, almost dreamy eyes, his military bearing is unmistakable. He speaks French almost as well as Turkish, better, indeed, than Arabic, for in Government circles Turkish is the official language. He is a very zealous Mussulman, perhaps even a little bigoted, and his strength of will is such that, where questions of religious principle are concerned, he has actually, and with success, braved the displeasure of the Grand Vizier at Constantinople, and disregarded the firman of his Imperial master. Rather more friendly to Jews than to Christians, he yet regards our presence in the Holy Land as a danger to the State, for, like all devout Moslems, he firmly believes in our political restoration to the land of our forefathers, and personally fears that such restoration will take place within the near future. The result is that he has placed, and continues to place, obstacles in the way of the growth of colonies there.

He has actually forbidden the roofing in and completion of a synagogue which was being built in "Rishon le-Zion" for the members of that colony. Still he is just and friendly, and has the greatest confidence in and esteem for M. Nissim Behar, who is, I should say, the most influential person in Jerusalem, and deservedly so. The Pasha only on one occasion received me in Oriental dress, and then apologized for not being in European garb. I am afraid I trespassed somewhat on his good nature; the legal business on which I had to see him was troublesome and difficult, but he was uniformly gracious. Still, his business face was much more sombre than that he wore in general conversation, and it was quite a pleasure to see his features light up when I complimented him on his ædileship. I did this in all sincerity; and, indeed, so far as roadmaking is concerned, he is a genuine old Roman. He is projecting roads from Jerusalem to Jericho, and Jaffa to Gaza, and so on. The engineer is a M. Franchetti, a Greek, who is well disposed to our community, and highly cultured. The lines of deviation of the former road were planned to pass through the Jewish cemetery, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and, while I was there, the heads of the community were in some consternation about it, particularly as the proposed track was already staked out. The objection to this desecration of the "House of Life" was pointed out to the Pasha and his engineer, and they both readily modified their original plan, and a slightly more devious path will be adopted rather than offend our susceptibilities. The carriage road to Hebron is what the Pasha is proudest of, and, as the road passes Rachel's Tomb, I hope I may be pardoned

for this long digression, and permitted to return to the Tomb.

Prayers at Rachel's Tomb

A visit to the Tomb is the commonest of all excursions from Jerusalem, as it is the easiest. It was barely a two hours' ride from there, and now that the road has been made so good it is even less. Most of our Jerusalemite brethren visit it on the eleventh of Marcheshvan, the alleged anniversary of Rachel's death. There is, I am told, no authority for this date, except the Jalkut Shimeoni of the twelfth century or thereabout. This, the earliest collection of the Midrashim then extant, states that Benjamin was born on that day, but Rabbi Simeon does not tell us the source from which he derived this information. However, the date is not questioned by our co-religionists, and they go on that day to pray at the grave of our ancestress. Unfortunately, they are not all free from superstition, and occasionally some poor fool, more credulous than his neighbors, writes a petition, begging her to intercede with the Almighty and give him his heart's desire. This extraordinary document the writer crams into the interstices of the thick stone walls with a long stick. I have heard of a case in which one of such petitions fell into the hands of a young English traveller. He fished it out with his umbrella, and now treasures it as a curiosity and a charm. Unfortunately, the sentiments of malice and ill-feeling expressed on that particular petition do credit to its author's qualities neither of heart nor of mind. As to the shape of the building, I need say nothing; most of my readers are perfectly familiar with it. It

is, like any other of the numerous Moslem Welies—white, cubical in form, and covered with a dome—which testify to the number of Mohammedan saints who must once have infested the country. The Mausoleum next the Ramsgate Synagogue, in which Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore lie buried, is an exact replica of Rachel's Tomb. The original sepulchre had been much dismantled, but was restored by Sir Moses during one of the earliest of his seven pilgrimages to the East. It is now the property of the Jewish community at Jerusalem, and the keys are held by an official of theirs—the worthy Rabbi Benjamin—who lives in one of the houses of the "Meah Shearim."

The white sarcophagus inside the sepulchre is comparatively new, and this and the numerous memorial tablets and Hebrew names of devotees written on the walls give it, internally, a most characteristic appearance. One of these tablets is not without a melancholy interest for the Jewish communities of Great Britain. It was placed there by Dr. Asher, whom we were all so proud to call our friend.[1] He told me how, when he and Samuel Montagu visited it, they were struck and annoyed by the numberless names of little great men who had sought to obtain a cheap immortality by inscribing their names on the stone walls. It was recorded how this community had contributed so much for the purchase of the ground; and that man had done this, and the other that. It is only too obvious that mutual admiration is a plant which thrives on tropical soil equally as well as, and

[1] Dr. A. Asher died in January, 1889. He was a founder and the first secretary of the United Synagogue, London.

perhaps better than, in temperate England itself. What most astonished Dr. Asher was the total absence of any reference to Rachel herself. Her name was nowhere mentioned, although all was but in her honor. Accordingly he had a marble tablet erected and engraved with a Hebrew inscription, of which the following is a translation:—

"*A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refuseth to be comforted for her children, because they are not.*

"*Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.*"

"*This stone was set up by one of Rachel's children, who hath come from a distant land.*"

The anonymity of the inscription is one of those silent life-lessons which its author was always giving us. His love for the Holy Land was ever ardent, and if at times he had to combat abuses, and be himself abused, he always spoke and wrote in a kindly spirit, and in the hope of affecting an improvement in the condition of our brethren there. He himself has now, alas, gone to another Distant Land; but he lived long enough to see much of his hope realized, and realized to a great extent through his own outspoken home-truths. We shall not look upon his like again. May his work also be rewarded!

Bethlehem

About four o'clock on Monday morning, the 1st October, 1888, we started for Hebron. The expedition

was to cost me forty francs, but then I travelled in grand style. There are wagons which ply daily on the new carriage road between Jerusalem and Hebron, and the fare—for natives—is only three francs a head. My dragoman had a lovely Arab horse, whose gentle amble and easy canter were very much preferable to the jolts and shakes of the carriage and three provided by mine host, the excellent Mr. Kaminitz. Everybody knows De Quincey's story of the Emperor of China who, finding the box of the state carriage presented to him by the English Ambassador infinitely more gorgeous than the sober velvet inside, thought that box his place, and made his coachman sit within and drive by means of jury reins passed through the front windows. The result was a somewhat unsteady progress, which led his Imperial Majesty to think driving a failure, and so he dedicated England's gift to the gods, and the chariot is still to be seen among the treasures of some temple at Pekin. The hint was not lost on me, and when, on my solitary rambles on the Continent, I had occasion to charter a pair-horse Droschke to take me the round of the palaces of Potsdam, not having any guide with me, I thought the best thing I could do was to sit beside my coachman and leave the body of the coach untenanted. He thought me mad, but to be thought mad is John Bull's privilege abroad. So, too, on this occasion my dread of such an impression being confirmed in Palestine did not deter me from changing places with my own dragoman, and acting as his equerry. We said the morning prayer at Rachel's Tomb as the sun rose, then made a hasty meal, and proceeded on our way. After riding about half an hour we departed from the

road and diverged to the left toward Bethlehem. Despite the earliness of the hour we found the famous city full of busy Bedouins and peasants, for it is the market town of the neighborhood for miles around. The population is almost exclusively Christian, and the inhabitants are distinguished by their good looks and rather Greek features. No doubt, there is a large admixture of Crusaders' blood in their veins. In 1831 the Moslems were expelled from the town, and they have never since returned in any numbers. With the exception of one man, there is absolutely no Jew residing there. The exception is, curiously enough, the doctor. The whole town has the most perfect confidence in and liking for him, but even he always spends Friday to Sunday in Jerusalem, with his wife and family. Of the Church of St. Mary, and the Chapel of the Nativity, and the other sights of Bethlehem, I do not propose to say anything. The Greeks, Latins, and Armenians there are always quarrelling about their holy sites, and however silly their strife may seem to us, we must not forget that, even in our own times, the second biggest war of the century—the Crimean—was directly occasioned by a similar dispute about the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

The Cave of Adullam

At nine o'clock we left Bethlehem. My dragoman and the rest of the party returned to the carriage and drove comfortably to Hebron, which they reached in three hours. I had a good map with me, and determined to pick my way across country, past the marble ruins of Herodium, Frank Mountain, and the cave of Adullam. The lonely eight hours' ride through the

wilderness of Judah was itself worth the whole journey to the East. I got a severe scolding from our Consul afterwards for venturing to go about in the solitary wilds without a Bedouin escort, and the guide books proclaim that it is impossible to do so. All I can say is, that I did not find a single lion on the path, nor meet a single hostile Arab. The footfall of my horse disturbed countless numbers of lizards, and one or two scorpions which had come to bask on the red rocks, in the fierce noonday sun, but, beyond these, for hours I saw no living creature. Near what must have been Tekoah were huge boulders of smooth white limestone and marble upon which my horse, albeit sure-footed as a cat, seemed to find it difficult to step without slipping. Evidently, the natural storehouse of fine stone here would repay capitalists as well as the famous Numidian quarries do. A fatiguing and somewhat dangerous climb brought one to a height of about four thousand feet, where a fine view of the hills to the east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea disclosed itself. After making frequent observations with compass and aneroid to determine my position, I at last found my way into a lateral valley, opening out from the Jebel Ferdis, and descended into a deep gorge.

The frowning cliffs on either side made the scene unspeakably imposing, and the consciousness that one was on the very theatre of David's adventures, during the most romantic episode of his career, peopled the whole country with the shadows of the past. Accordingly, after carefully turning a sharp corner where the cliff took an abrupt turn to the left and then to the right again, it seemed the most natural thing in the

world to come upon a small camp of Bedouins, clustered round two little springs of water, which rose in the angle formed by the double bend of the rocky wall. The Arabs looked just like the pictures in our familiar Scripture books, and were doubtless dressed in similar garb to what they have worn for the last four thousand years. I rode up to them, and despite the incongruity hastened to give them each a cigarette. After that I felt reassured about their intentions, because the Arab is not civilized enough to betray a man after eating of his salt or smoking of his weed. I dismounted, and one of them hospitably attempted to make my horse drink, as they were drinking, from the tiny pools. The noble steed must have been very thirsty,—its rider was,—but yet it resolutely declined the water, and persisted in its refusal, until one kind-hearted son of the desert doffed his turban, filled it with water, and lifted it to the horse's mouth. The novel bucket may have improved the water's flavor, it certainly disguised the color, and anyhow the horse refused no longer. After this success, I thought I would try the water, too, and so I did, but my first mouthful was my last, and from another such a sip may I be delivered! The experience of that awful taste elucidated to me how real David's longing must have been, when he jeopardized the lives of the three warriors whom he sent for Bethlehem water, with which to wash the taste out of his mouth. The story is told in II Samuel xxiii. 13-17:

And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the Cave of Adullam; and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold, and the garrison of the Philistines

was then in Bethlehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the Well of Bethlehem, that is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the Well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it. These things did the three mighty men.

This and other indications convinced me that I must be in the immediate neighborhood of the very cave in which David took refuge during his guerrilla warfare, first with Saul, and then with the Philistines. Accordingly, in broken Arabic, I asked my dusky friends whether there was not some wonderful hole in the earth somewhere near. They nodded acquiescence, and then offered to show me the way. Three brawny fellows, strong as the Arabs of the Pyramids, conducted me up what seemed the most terrible of precipices. But for the tennis shoes I was luckily wearing, I could never have preserved my footing; but, at last, after a climb of about ten minutes, we reached the narrow entrance to the cave, which expanded like a funnel. Unfortunately, we were unable to see anything but the darkness around us. My last match had been smoked away, and our only light was an occasional spark from the flint and tinder with which the Arabs bid defiance to Bryant and to May. I did not, however, penetrate very far into the gloomy hollow of the mountain, and I was not sorry to return to the light of day.

ARTÂS

I remounted, took leave of my friends, and one of them guided me to Artâs, a village in the valley oasis fertilized by Solomon's Pools. These wonderful reservoirs, with their aqueducts carried along the mountain slopes, are remarkably successful, and prove how remunerative waterworks would be. Artâs provides Jerusalem with all its fruit and vegetables, and the whole village is one large smiling garden, which the traveller is loth to quit.

Unfortunately, the shade of the palms had to be left, and I had to ride disconsolately on across the Wâdy, and mount the hill on the other side, as far as the old caravan track to Hebron. Here I passed some hundred camels, and pressed on till I came to the carriage-road. It was past four in the afternoon, and I had to gallop to make up for lost time. The nearer one got to the city, the more people were to be seen on the road. When about a mile from the gates, I was met by Bezaleel Kaminitz and the beadle of the Hebron community, on horseback, who came cantering along. They had been sent by the Congregation to raise the hue and cry, for I had tarried so long in my coming that they feared I had fallen into the hands of the Bedouins. I did not stop, and Bezaleel, who is an expert horseman, wheeled round in fine style, but the beadle was less fortunate. His horse threw him, but he soon got on again, and onward he galloped, I galloped, we galloped all three. An estimable and well-to-do Turkish merchant dressed in silks and satins was soberly ambling along, on a large white donkey, in a reverse direction to ourselves. His donkey, uneasy at

the pattering of our dozen hoofs, pricked up his ears and turned tail. His respectable rider seemed surprised, and fell off. Hebron, though nearly three thousand feet high, lies in a narrow valley, between the mountains. The descent from the northwest is rather steep, and owing to the rapidity of our progress, our horses were sometimes sliding down, almost on their haunches. It was not convenient to stop, and so we had to leave the Turk to pick himself up as best he could. We rode on and reached Hebron upon the stroke of five, the beadle had a final tumble from his steed, and thus we arrived at our journey's end.

HEBRON, THE DEAD SEA, AND THE JORDAN

The City of Friendship — Machpelah — The Jews of Hebron — A Night Ride — A Caravansary — Jericho — The Dead Sea — The Jordan.

The City of Friendship

Hebron, or Khalil, the "City of Friendship," is perhaps the oldest city of the Holy Land, and in interest it vies with Jerusalem itself. Among us Jews it is reverently described as קברי אבות, "the Burial Ground of our Fathers," and a pilgrimage thither is highly esteemed. The Mohammedans regard it with even more reverence as a sacred place than Jerusalem, for is it not the last resting-place of Abraham—el Khalîl Allâh—the friend of God and His great prophet? Their regard, although flattering to the founder of our race, carries with it the disadvantage that it makes the Hebronites the most fanatical of the followers of Islam, and the most intolerant. Christians cannot live at Hebron, and Jews there are treated as dogs. Curses both loud and deep greeted us as we walked round the Great Mosque, which encloses the Cave of Machpelah; but, as we did not understand the meaning of the imprecations or appreciate the delicacy or appropriateness of the choice epithets applied to us, and, as the missiles thrown at us were not well aimed, we could afford to treat our reception with amused nonchalance. Nowhere in the East did I meet with such bigotry as at Hebron, and it did not surprise me to learn that Dr. Stein, the medical man whom we

sent out there some time ago, has no Mohammedans among his *clientèle,* because the Hebronites, unlike the Mohammedans who live in Jerusalem and elsewhere are too utter fatalists to believe that medicine can arrest the progress of disease or the angel of death. Though the local government there and in the neighboring villages employs him occasionally, it is merely as a coroner to inspect a corpse or hold an inquest and certify the cause of death! Still he is honored with the title of Government Physician, and though his services are gratuitous, the fact that they are accepted adds to his influence. He is extremely well liked by the Jews, and they were unanimous in his praise. Dr. Stein takes great interest in the climatology of his station, and asked me to apply for him to the Meteorological Office for Barometer, Thermometer, and Rain Gauge. I ascertained that, for years past, no observations had been made nearer than Beyrout, and Mr. Reginald Scott, the Secretary of the office, gladly submitted my request to the Council. However, they could not accede to it, because Hebron is not a seaport nor its weather likely to affect navigation.

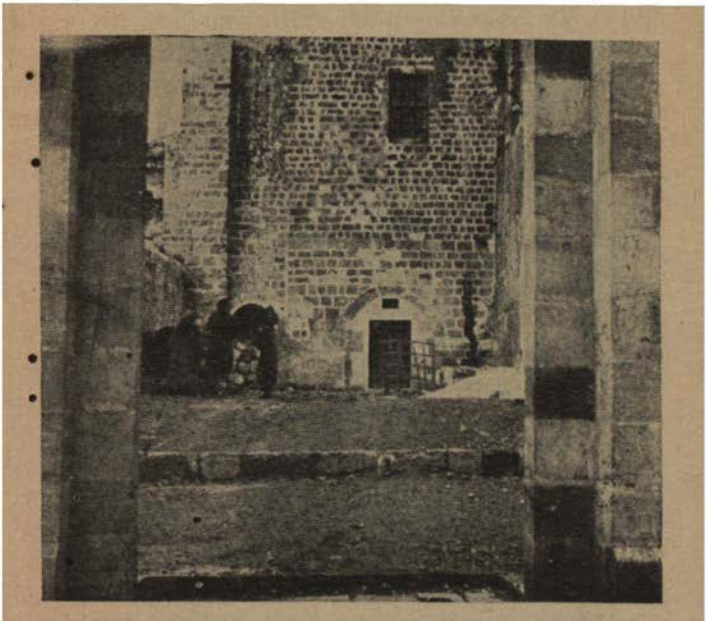
Hebron is the first town seen by the wanderer who reaches Palestine by way of the Desert of Sinai. Even the most phlegmatic of temperaments cannot fail to be deeply impressed by a pilgrimage to the last resting-place of the Patriarchs. But quite apart from considerations of sentiment, the beauty of its position and almost English verdure of the slopes which surround it make Hebron pre-eminent. It is, therefore, by no means surprising to find that Dean Stanley and other writers are quite poetical in describing the contrast between the wilderness of rocks one has to

traverse for many days, and the fertility of the well-watered valley in which it lies. The prevailing color of the surrounding cliffs is purple, and the Mohammedans say that from the red earth of Hebron, Adam, the first man, was formed, and that thence he derived his name. The connection thus made between Adam and Edom, or Esau, the traditional patriarch of the Arabs of Syria, is worthy of note. That Adam was also buried here, both Talmudical and Mohammedan legends agree. Its early name—Kiriat Arba—which might mean "the City of the Four Patriarchs," is pointed to as evidence in favor of that hypothesis.

Machpelah

The mosque, built of red and white marble, is almost square, and its four minarets, one rising from each corner, give it a characteristic appearance. The massive smooth-hewn stones of the enclosing wall remind one of the ruins of the Temple, and the sixty square buttresses and cornices all around remain to show us how strongly fortified it must have been at the time when the Crusaders were borrowing territorial titles from Hebron, and the Saracens were winning back the territory itself. Like all the holy places it has passed through many vicissitudes, and had been both temple and church before Saladin made a mosque out of it. Into the Mosque itself, no Giaour is permitted to enter without the Sultan's special firman. This was obtained by the Prince of Wales when he went there in 1862, and the visit is graphically described in Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine." But without a firman the most powerful persuasives will not

secure an entrance. Even Baron and Baroness Edmond de Rothschild could not succeed in getting the Pasha of Palestine to admit them on his own responsibility, and so, although they travelled by land all over Palestine, Hebron they did not visit. And Mr. Benn Levy has told me that a bribe of five hundred pounds



THE GREAT MOSQUE AT MACHPELAH

was not sufficient to make the Governor of Hebron, or the Sheikh of the Mosque, stretch a point in his case.[1]

In a corner of the enclosing wall, near the lofty entrance which fronts the Mosque, is a small gap built

[1] It was the writer's privilege to enter the Mosque in disguise and without *bakhshish* in 1895. See below, pp. 137-8.

up with smooth stones, but leaving sufficient space for a man to crawl through. This unofficial entrance leads to the subterranean chambers, and on the eve of our festivals we Jews are permitted to come here to pray, as we do at the Wailing Place at Jerusalem. Of course, we are not permitted to go down the narrow passage into the world-old vault or cave below, but there are not unnaturally many Jewish folk-tales which cluster round the spot. Ludwig A. Frankl, for instance, gives the origin of the "Purim Taka," or "window Purim," still celebrated by the Sephardic Jews of Hebron on the anniversary of their deliverance from an intolerable tax. It appears that once there was a Pasha there who was very fond of money. Fired by the memory of the methods of King Richard the Lion-Hearted, or perhaps of his own sweet initiative, for great minds think alike, His Excellency determined to get money out of his Jewish subjects. He demanded fifty thousand piastres under threat of killing the leading members of the community and selling the rest into slavery. The Rabbis were direly perplexed, for they could not scrape the sum together. At last, they could think of no other expedient than to write to the Patriarchs about their trouble. They did so, and bribed the watchman of the Mosque to lower the petition by a string into the Cave of Machpelah, for, of course, even he dared not enter there. That night the Pasha woke up and, at his bedside, found three venerable looking sages, who demanded fifty thousand piastres of him, and threatened him with death if he did not pay. The Pasha saw that they were in earnest, went to his money-bags, and paid the fifty thousand to the

three weird old men. Next morning, at break of day, the Pasha's soldiers come to the Jewish quarter to fetch the fifty thousand subsidy he levied upon them. The Jews are all in synagogue, praying, for they know their last hour has come. The soldiers knock at the door, and the beadle hurries to open it, when he notices a bag of money in the hall, just where the people wash their hands before entering the synagogue. He brings it to the Parnas, who hands it to the Pasha. The Pasha recognizes both purse and money as his own, and declares that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob themselves rose from their grave to keep him from an evil deed, and that the Jews must, indeed, be a people dear to Allah, if the Patriarchs, after so many thousands of years, would come to life again merely to protect them from injury. He makes the community a present of the money, but requires them to promise to pray for him if ever he should be in trouble. There are elements of truth in this story, and obviously it is capable of a very rational explanation.

The Jews of Hebron

The community used to be very small, and even in 1888 numbered barely a thousand souls out of a total population of ten times that number. About the year 1265 Nachmanides went to Palestine, and a short letter he wrote to his son Nachman gives us a vivid description of Palestine as it was left after the Crusades. "In one word," he says, "the unhappy rule seems to be that the holier a place may have been, the more desolate it is." Jerusalem was in ruins, and what had been marble places, were then Hefker, waste or common

lands, free to be appropriated by anybody who pleased. There was only a single Minyan of Jews there, who every Sabbath met in their houses for prayer. He persuaded them to set apart one of the less demolished buildings as a synagogue, and they actually sent to Shechem (Nablous) for a Sepher. He also went to Hebron, "the city of the graves of our forefathers, that I might pray there, and buy myself a grave, and there be buried." In those times there was not a single Jew there. But a hundred years before, when Benjamin of Tudela visited it in 1170, he found a few of our co-religionists living there, and, indeed, went down with some to the Cave of Machpelah, which he describes and which was evidently not guarded so jealously in his time as it is now. Nowadays, there are about as many Ashkenazim as Sephardim, and each community has three synagogues. The Ashkenazim have no provision whatever for education, but there are about sixty pupils in the Talmud Torah of the Sephardim. It would be highly desirable if the *Alliance Israélite* or the Anglo-Jewish Association would see its way to establishing a school there of even the humblest dimensions. I gathered from the communal leaders that this they anxiously desired, and that, though poor, they would gladly contribute to the support of such a school.

The Sephardi Chacham is Rachmim Franko, and the Ashkenazi Rabbi, R. Simeon Manasseh Schlutzker, who is over ninety years old. There is only one Jew—a Mr. Romano—of even moderate means in the town, and he is rather an absentee landlord, for he lives the greater part of the year in Constantinople. He owns a fine large house, of course of stone, and the ban-

queting hall on the first floor would not disgrace a Norman Castle. He is very hospitable, and Jewish guests are brought to his house quite as a matter of course to be boarded and lodged if necessary, just as though it were an hotel. Neither payment nor a present is accepted, but one is expected to contribute to the חברת גמילות חסדים, the local "Society for Good Works," which, of course, one is only too glad to do.

Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias constitute the four "holy cities" of the Jews, and till colonization had altered matters, nearly all the Holy Land Jews resided in them. In Safed they constitute one-half of the twelve thousand inhabitants, and in Tiberias they number three thousand out of five thousand. Besides these, there are a thousand Jews in Haifa, a thousand in Sidon, and two thousand in Jaffa, out of a total of six, twelve, and fifteen thousand respectively. There are only one hundred and fifty Jews out of ten thousand in Acre, one hundred and twenty at Shechem out of eighteen thousand, and one hundred and twenty at Gaza out of twenty thousand. Including four thousand colonists, which is perhaps an over-estimate, it would seem that, notwithstanding the recent immigration of Russian and Roumanian Jews, there are not more than 43,500 of our co-religionists in Palestine out of a total population of over half a million.

A Night Ride

One Monday night about nine o'clock we left the Hotel Jerusalem for the Jordan and the Dead Sea. We were a small but imposing caravan. First came our Bedouin escort, Sheikh of the village of Abu Dis,

whose services we had engaged through the intervention of H. B. M. Consul. Then there was Dragoman Khalil, who was ostensibly in charge of the expedition. Next to him came the hotel-keeper's son, Bezaleel Kaminitz, my *alter ego* and *fidus Achates*, who never left me out of sight from the time of my arrival in Jerusalem till my re-embarkation at Jaffa. Next came the muleteer Selim, whose mule was laden with good things, sufficient in amount as it seemed to me for forty days' and forty nights' wandering in the desert, but appetite surpassed expectation, and, like Æsop with the bread basket, Selim returned very much lighter than he went. All but myself were armed to the teeth, and the water bottles hanging from our saddles made me feel quite an explorer. Khalil was very proud of his gun, and after break of day kept pointing it in all directions. There was plenty of game about, and no game laws, and he was determined to do wonderful things in the slaughter of innocents. He stalked a good many sandgrouse, and once, in the plain of Jericho, his ambition soared even to a royal eagle, but his success was limited to the destruction of powder and shot and to frightening me. I had no mind to be his quarry, and, as we cantered on, language not altogether without strength was required to persuade him that there was no necessity for me to look down the barrels of his gun to know that he was using ball instead of shot! The muleteer was musical, and albeit the melody was but a nasal twang, and his theme the excellence of the food he carried, the song of Selim lent an air of romance to the expedition. It did not need this to make our midnight ride delightful. It is hopeless to attempt adequately to describe the glory of

the starry night with the bright eyes of countless angels beaming sympathy with man. We felt in no talkative mood, and, once started, soon dropped into single file and gave our thoughts full rein. Of such a night in the Holy Land, Thackeray writes that the recollection of its sensations must remain with a man as long as his memory lasts, and he should feel them as often as he should talk of them little.

We skirted the Mount of Olives, passed Bethany, and rode slowly on from one gorge to another, occasionally climbing a hill, but for the most part descending the bed of some dried-up torrent or Wâdy. The bridle path was rugged in the extreme, and dangerous in parts, so that we had several times to dismount and lead our horses by the bridle. Yet every now and then we came across traces of the old Roman road to Jericho, which proved that time was when, despite the considerable fall of nearly four thousand feet in the twenty miles or so which separate Jerusalem from Jericho, they could not have been much more than a three hours' ride from one another.

A Caravansary

About half-way there, we reached a khan, or caravansary, with two huge portals, which looked as though they barred the way to some mighty building behind them. We thundered at the gates and made as much noise as we could, but not the slightest notice was taken of us. This confirmed me in my belief that here was an enchanted castle, but that I was not to be the lucky one to wake the sleeping beauty. Khalil grew impatient and fired his gun, but still no answer came. Our horses required a little rest, and so there was

nothing for it but to dismount and lie down on the naked rock. I never slept so sound in my life, and, though they woke me up in less than half an hour, I felt as refreshed as though I had had a whole night's rest. The following afternoon we passed the Hadrûr Khan again on our way back. This time, after some parleying, we gained admittance, and found that the entire garrison consisted of but one poor old Arab, who lived in a dismantled little shanty in the corner of a large and empty courtyard surrounded by high stone walls. If there were any pigs in Palestine, which, except in one or two monasteries, there are not, I should have taken it for a pig-sty. Mine host was very attentive and made us Turkish coffee as best he could. He admitted that he had heard us the night before, but had taken us for Bedouins, of whom he lived in terror of his life. He showed us the inner door of the shanty all riddled with shot, and assured us that he had at one time been regularly besieged and all but captured and slain, for the sake of the two or three pewter *blisk-lik* coins he possessed.

Jericho

We rode onward on our journey till we came to the Sultan's Spring, perhaps the very same as that which Elisha's handful of salt had sweetened. This, or the "Pool of Moses" close by, must have been intended as the scene of the famous interview in "The Talisman" between Saladin and the Prince of Scotland. A few minutes further on we rode through one of the noble arches of Herod's aqueduct, which boldly traverses the plain, and stopped awhile to admire the massive ruins. Soon we reached the Russian Hospice

in Jericho, where we arrived about three in the morning. The approach to the world-famous or infamous place, once a love gift from Antony to Cleopatra, was through thick vegetation, which reminded me of some Surrey wood more than anything else. I know this will be regarded as a fault in local coloring, but really I saw no trace of the famous palms or roses or balsam gardens with which tradition glorifies Jericho. The vegetation is tropical because the natural depression of the plain and, indeed, of the whole of the gigantic fissures constituting the valley of the lower Jordan, makes the climate and temperature that of places fifteen degrees nearer the equator. In the garden of the Hospice grow bananas and figs and clustering grapes as in Egypt, but it is the fields of maize and other cereals, and the drooping willows, and scarlet flowers of the gum-arabic plant that most impress the traveller. The Hospice itself contains rude wood-cut portraits of the Czar and other Russians, but is conspicuous for the absence of monks. It is intended for the shelter of pilgrims on the way to baptism in the Jordan, and is open to all comers, although no food is provided.

The Dead Sea

After a short stay, and just as the sun was rising, we started for the Dead Sea seven miles off. We had to ride across a plain which is fairly level except for a gentle downward slope. After leaving the fertile belt about two miles southeast of Jericho, we entered a barren tract quite devoid of vegetation. Here the soil under foot is a sort of sandy clay coated with layers of asphalt and studded with tiny but bright crystals of salt. As soon as the shore

of the lake was reached, the unexpected beauty of the scene almost took one's breath away. The water looked as lovely, blue, clear, and inviting as Buttermere in the summer time. The hills around were higher and the precipices, especially on the eastern or Moab side, more abrupt, but the play of lights and shadows was the same, and the brilliant coloring of the limestone and plutonic rocks made up for the absence of foliage. Desolate the scene was, but there were none of the gruesome horrors expected in the Dead Sea. Though standing one thousand and three hundred feet below the ocean level, in the bowels of the earth as it were, we could not feel far from the world, when through the clear air we could distinctly see the bell-tower on the Mount of Olives, four thousand feet above us, and, as the crow flies, twenty-five miles away. A few days before I had seen the Dead Sea, from that very tower, at sunset on the Sabbath day, and its dull gray or greenery-yellow color made it seem typical of misery and mystery. But on its shores it was proximity, not distance, that lent enchantment to the view.

Of course, I bathed in the water, and found it easy to swim in, but not so very different from ordinary sea water. The taste was awful, the bitter pungency of the manganese quite neutralizing that of the salt, and the water made a mosquito bite on my ankle smart terribly. The sun was too hot to make it safe to stay in the water more than a minute or two with the head unprotected, but the bath was worth the risk. It felt and looked more like bathing in oil than in water. The surface was still and smooth as the most perfect plate-glass, and just as clear, despite

the great depth of this, the northern, half of the lake. Thirteen hundred feet and more have been fathomed, yet in this vast volume of water not even the lowest organism can live. We gazed awhile at Mount Nebo opposite, and the Sheikh pointed out a ruin in the hills of Judah behind us as the grave of Moses, on our own—the wrong—side of the Dead Sea. Moslem tradition does not admit that "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." The Dead Sea is rather smaller in extent than the Lake of Geneva and only nine miles across. The top of Pisgah frowned majestically before us nearly five thousand feet high. Till one sees the character of the country and the marvellous clearness of the atmosphere, one cannot realize how from its summit Moses could have seen, as he gazed, long and lovingly, the whole of the Promised Land lying mapped out before him, "all the land of Gilead unto Dan."

Geological considerations make it almost impossible to assume that the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah are now covered by the waters of the Dead Sea. The chasm it occupies is primeval, and evaporation has made the sea shallower than it was, not deeper. There is nothing in the Bible narrative, nor, I believe, in Talmud or Midrash to lead us to assume that the cities of the plain were destroyed by water as well as fire. The sulphur and bitumen near the northern end, and perhaps, too, the lava, and other indications of volcanic agency there, point to the crumbling clay, in parts like quicksand treacherous to the foot, which extends between Jericho and the Bahr el Lût (Lot's Lake) as the more likely site. The only strong arguments to the contrary are the fanciful traveller's tales,

of those who have ventured to navigate the sea, and assert that they have noticed ruins of towers and palaces in the depths below. It is possible that these accounts are not altogether drawn from the imagination. A haze often hangs over the sea, and, sometimes perhaps, the atmospheric conditions, which in the Straits of Messina give rise to the Fata Morgana, are here reproduced.

The Jordan

From the Dead Sea we rode rapidly on to the Ford of Jordan, or "Place of Baptism," probably the site of Gilgal, and the place where Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire. Here again I bathed and swam across the stream, which was rapid and turbid, but almost as narrow as the Mole at Esher, or the Thames above Henley. Childhood's preconceptions had, as Mark Twain says in his "New Pilgrim's Progress,"—the best guide book to the Orient—pictured a mighty river seven thousand miles long and proportionally wide! In fact, it is about as long as the not less famous Thames, only much narrower. The water was warm, but after my bath in the Dead Sea and exposure to the fierce rays of the tropical sun, I found the shade of the thicket and cliffs made Jordan's water a most welcome change. It is as much discolored as that of the Nile, and, meeting some Russian pilgrims on their way to the only bath their religion enjoins and they can be persuaded to take, I could not help thinking that it was they and their like who had polluted the pristine purity of the snows of Hermon. We rode back through the jungle, in which we were not sorry to hear that lions are now

scarcely ever to be met with, and returned home as quickly as we could. On the way we wondered at the almost inaccessible hermits' cells in the rocks of the Jebel Karantel. We were on the other side of a deep gorge, and the caverns in which the poor devotees spend their lives seem, and no doubt originally were, the lairs of wild beasts. One blood-curdling track, I cannot call it path, was so precipitous that a little donkey was the only four-footed animal that would step upon it, and that had been trained to go on it ever since it could walk.

We got back to Jerusalem shortly before ten o'clock, after an absence of less than twenty-four hours, of which we had spent nineteen in the saddle. We were very tired, but not too tired to do justice to supper, or to spend an hour in Mr. Kaminitz's drawing-room listening to a concert, in which some ladies and gentlemen staying in the hotel took part. After the many disappointments agreeable and otherwise which we had experienced in our expedition, this music was not the least of the day's surprises.

AGRICULTURAL COLONIES IN PALESTINE

Rishon le-Zion — Other Colonies — The Agricultural School — The Montefiore Garden.

RISHON LE-ZION

I HAD to leave Jerusalem on Thursday evening, the 4th October, in order to catch the Beyrout boat, which was to start next day from Jaffa. Dr. d'Arbela had kindly consented to accompany me, and show me over the "Rishon le-Zion" colony. Our carriage was at the door by eight o'clock, but, what with official business at the Serail and before the Cadi, telegrams to England and preparing for the European mail, farewell visits and endless leave-takings, it was only with much difficulty that, after about as hard a day's work as I have ever had, we managed to get away by midnight. Mr. Kaminitz, whose Hebrew hotel bill, both for excellence of vocabulary and calligraphy and for smallness of total, is one of my most prized Oriental curiosities, sat on the box by the driver, and off we drove in gallant style. This time we had a landau instead of a rude open wagon, and the road had been made smoother than it was when I first came, and yet the jolting and shaking seemed ever so much worse. I suppose it was because there was no view to distract my attention, and because I was so very sleepy and so unable to sleep. The Doctor was an old stager, and no doubt considered the roads Elysian in comparison with those of Zanzibar, anyhow *he* did not grumble. We got an hour's sleep on a divan in

Bohnenberger's Inn at Ramleh, had some coffee there, started again at four, and after a couple of hours' drive, half of which was along a sandy cart-track to the left of the Jaffa Road, reached the colony shortly after daybreak. It lies on a slight eminence in the midst of a sandy plain, across which an unmistakable sea-breeze blows. The total area is about six million square metres, rather more than two square miles. The soil is dreadfully sandy, and can support no cereals, though experts say it is thoroughly well adapted for the cultivation of the vine. This at any rate is the somewhat dearly bought experience of the colonists, who have in consequence latterly devoted their exclusive attention to the grape. The effect, from the æsthetic point of view, is anything but picturesque, the ground seems covered with low brambly vines, looking for all the world like the furze on some barren English heath. Of course, I saw it under comparatively unfavorable auspices, the vintage was over, and every grape had been religiously plucked from its parent bush. The viticulture is that of Northern Europe, and I must confess to disappointment at not being able to see each colonist sitting, or—preferably—working, *under* his vine, instead of stooping over it as he pruned. A vineyard looks infinitely more beautiful if it is trained along stately poplars or festooned from some other giants of the forest. But a collection of a million low shrubs, which represent the grape treasures of Rishon, is more practical and remunerative, and certainly it teaches a lesson of independence. I am told that its black grapes in flavor and in size compare favorably with the choicest fruit of Burgundy, and that the prospects of a large export of red wine

vintages to France are highly promising. Anyhow no expense is being spared by the philanthropist who is developing Rishon. On the erection of a *cuve-mère* and cooling chamber alone an outlay of a hundred thousand francs has been sanctioned, and M. Alphonse Bloch, the amiable and wide-awake Director of the colony, anticipates great results in about two years from now. The colonists take pride and delight in their work, each has a half hectare or so of his very own, and all are idealists, and have a confident belief in the future. At the time of the ingathering of the grapes there is more work to be done than hands to do it. M. Bloch has had to hire Arabs to assist in the picking, and soldiers to guard against the depredations of jackals and other Arabs. There are some three hundred colonists in all, of whom about a quarter are able-bodied men, mostly Roumanians, and they seem able to fight and by no means loth to do so on occasion and to protect their own. The houses are neat and substantially built of stone, most have two stories, and the principal street, which contains nearly all of the thirty or forty houses that constitute the village, is wide, straight, and planted with trees, so that it makes quite a little boulevard. Every house has a little garden ground in front, and a yard and outhouse and often a stable behind. The finest building in the place is the official residence of M. Bloch. This boasts of two bedrooms and as many sitting rooms, of which one is the general office of the colony. There are no cows in the colony, water is too expensive, and so the breakfast, which the Director was good enough to give me, largely consisted of condensed milk and preserved butter, to which I preferred the honey—as, indeed, the

wasps did also. Behind this "Government House" was quite an old-fashioned English flower-garden, which it did one's heart good to see—wall-flowers in autumn and pansies and irises, and "lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." The fleur-de-lis was, of course, a "charge" of the royal arms of Judah, long before the House of France arrogated to itself the lovely emblem. Near the garden is the site of an unfinished synagogue, which remains as a monument of Turkish bigotry. Before a building can be erected for public worship the sanction of the Pasha must be obtained. Reouf will not give this, and neither for love nor money is he to be shaken from his determination. The synagogue therefore remains roofless, and but for the foresight of the late Director, M. Osovesky, who had a large room planned in the basement, ostensibly for the purpose of a school, the colonists would have no place where they could meet for prayer. The school itself is in an adjoining house, on the first floor. Here a busy class of chubby little boys were learning the mysteries of the circulation of the blood. M. Bloch is a great purist, and insists that all the proletariat of the colony shall speak the most classical Hebrew, so they are taught in that language, and answer questions readily and pertinently in the sacred tongue. Much attention is being devoted to the planting of trees; there are about three thousand olive trees and a like number of almond trees in the colony. Besides these M. Bloch pointed out to me some Eucalyptus and castor-oil trees, both of which grow fast, are shady, and will in time attract clouds and supply the defects of irrigation. The castor-oil tree is particularly interesting, as it is probably the original of Jonah's gourd, the קיקיון של יונה,

a phrase by the by favored for the titles of their books by Rabbinical authors named after the rebellfous prophet, and not a little appropriate.

Other Colonies

It may be worth while to give a list of the other Palestine Colonies, mostly near Jaffa, although conditions of time and space prevented my paying them a visit.[1] They are:

פתח תקוה "The Gate of Hope," 13,500,000 square metres, 411 inhabitants.

יהודיה "Juditha," 144,000 square metres, 75 inhabitants.

נחלת ראובן "Reuben's Heritage," formerly "Wâdy Hinim," 1,500,000 square metres, 38 inhabitants.

מזכרת בתיה "Bethuia's Memorial," formerly "Ekron," 3,500,000 square metres, 226 inhabitants.

גדרה "Gádárá," 2,500,000 square metres, 40 inhabitants.

זכרון יעקב "Jacob's Memorial," formerly Samarin, near Haifa, 19,000,000 square metres, 644 inhabitants. This was visited by Sir Grant Duff in his recent visit to Palestine, and he refers to it in his article on "A Winter in Syria," which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for January, 1889.

ראש פנה "The Corner Stone," near Safed. 3,000,000 square metres, 223 inhabitants.

יסוד המעלה "Excelsior," 2,000,000 square metres, 39 inhabitants.

[1] Most of these colonies I visited on my subsequent journeys to the Holy Land.

The Agricultural School

After we had stayed about four hours at Rishon, M. Bloch was good enough to drive me over to the Agricultural School of the *Alliance Israélite* about eight miles away. M. Bloch drove a light phaeton with two horses, which, though not much to look at, managed to carry us, quickly and smoothly, to our destination. After passing through a fine avenue of trees, which might have graced a park, we came to the main building. Although it was nearly noon, we found M. Hirsch, the Director, and his wife, in the garden, sitting in the shade. All around were aromatic orange and citron trees. The Ethrogim, of course, had all been picked, but the oranges were not yet ripe. However, it would never do to have left the Holy Land without tasting an orange, and so I persuaded M. Hirsch to give me one. It was rather sour, of course, but refreshing, and, besides, I had my way. The orange crop at this garden is quite important; M. Hirsch had disposed of that season's for no less a sum than a hundred Napoleons.[2] There were forty pupils at the school, all of whom happened to be in one schoolroom, learning geography. They hailed from about a dozen places on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, and in age they ranged from twelve to eighteen years. Despite their ungainly French blue blouses, they looked, albeit somewhat stupid, the picture of health, and sunburnt even beyond expectation. The school possesses some fine machinery, an Artesian well, sesame fields, and quite a model farm. The pupils are specially taught fruit and vegetable gardening,

[2] In 1901 the crop fetched more than five times that amount.

and are treated on a kind of apprentice system, by which, after three or four years' training, they leave the school, with a bonus, or salary, of forty pounds in their pockets. Of course, the circumstances of the case prevent the whole undertaking from being carried out so as to be anything like self-supporting. But there is no doubt that much good is being done, and that its proud title, מקוה ישראל, "The Hope of Israel," is not undeserved. Since I left, the *Alliance* has determined to increase the number of the pupils to sixty, and to draft to it some of the pupils from its school in Tunis. Apparently, a first batch, consisting of seven young Tunisians, arrived at the school on the 19th November, 1888. After completing their agricultural education at Jaffa, they are to return home to find work with local farmers, till they have saved enough money to become themselves owners of a little farm. How the pupils can best spend the interval between leaving Mikveh Israel and setting up as peasant proprietors themselves, is no easy problem. It may be desirable to use the Montefiore Garden at Jaffa, if available, for the purpose of farming it out to the young men, who would thus be almost independent and yet not without supervision.

The Montefiore Garden

From the Agricultural School we drove across country on an execrable track to the Montefiore Garden about five miles off, two miles or less from Jaffa, and immediately opposite the prosperous but anti-Semitic colony of Sarona, founded in 1868 by some Germans from Würtemberg. We found that Samhûn, the caretaker, or farmer, of the garden (he pays no rent), had

gone to Jaffa to make his purchases for Sabbath, and had taken the key with him. I represented that, as I held a power of attorney from Mr. Sebag Montefiore, I was justified in breaking open the rude lock, but Samhûn's son threatened to go across the road and call a policeman if we did! After considerable battering at the gate, we found that we could not move it, and so thought it best to give up the attempt. However, we looked over the garden from various points of vantage—on tip-toe over the gate, from the window of a building where a massive water-wheel has been built over the well, and through gaps in the cactus hedge. The prickly pears were nice to eat, their parasites, the cochineal insects, most curious to watch, but I was unwise enough to make a still closer acquaintance with the hedge. Thinking I could squeeze through one gap which seemed wider than the rest. I put on a pair of gloves and tried to get in. The prickles were too many for me, and I retired in discomfort and discomfiture. For weeks afterwards I could not put on those gloves, and they were a new pair, too, without getting stung. Nevertheless we saw enough of the garden to satisfy ourselves of its wonderful fertility. Notwithstanding the comparative neglect of its gardeners, the Samhûns, who, poor fellows, were down with the fever, the place seemed a very paradise in its luxuriant vegetation, and bananas, dates, oranges, citrons, and plums made the air sweet with their fragrance. We got to Jaffa about two, met Dr. d'Arbela and Mr. Osovesky at Hirsch Cohen's restaurant there, and made an excellent dinner. The Jewish merchants and restaurateurs seemed to be prospering. H. B. M. Vice-Consul, the courteous Mr.

Amzalek, is a Jew, and yet, strangely enough, although there are over two thousand Jews (about an equal number of Ashkenazim and Sephardim) in Jaffa, and a much larger number in the neighborhood, in the Colonies, and elsewhere, there is no large synagogue, and only an apology for a Talmud Torah school. The Sephardim have neither Rabbi nor teacher, and al-

JEWISH INTERIOR AT DAMASCUS

though there are numerous Minyanim, communal affairs seem entirely disorganized. Mr. Kaminitz took me to see the Hotel Palestine, which he had just acquired, and I very much admired its situation and airiness. It is on the Jerusalem Road, and can be confidently recommended to all visitors who wish to break their journey at Jaffa. Mr. Kaminitz's hotel is the only one east of Paris where I have seen soap sup-

plied gratis, and for cleanliness and comfort at Jerusalem his Hotel Jerusalem, and at Jaffa doubtless the Hotel Palestine also, are unsurpassed. His tact in appeasing unwelcome visitors and keeping his guests from worry and annoyance is beyond all praise, and altogether he thoroughly deserves the patronage he receives. About an hour before Sabbath I embarked for Damascus on board the Khedivieh (Egyptian) steamship "Rahmaniyeh," and regretfully closed one of the most interesting chapters in my life.

PALESTINE REVISITED IN 1895

The Old — The New.

THE OLD

A SCORE or so of old men with white beards seated at a long table covered by open volumes of the Talmud. The sacred Scroll of the Law is enshrined at their left, and behind them we see ponderous old tomes, tight fitted into the alcove of a vault-like chamber, with quaint curves and angles. Is not this some souvenir from the brush of an old master? No, old-world picture as it is, and appropriately framed, it is from a photograph of an actuality of to-day. I saw it not so many years ago in Jerusalem, and anyone is welcome to see it to-morrow, or next year, or haply a hundred years hence. The very faults in execution are silent witnesses to its truth. The awkward crookedness of the bench, the angularity of the hanging lamps, the uncouth commingling of caps and beards, are necessary results of a camera focused at a disadvantage. The cheap and ugly clock in the corner could not have been introduced into any sketch of the imagination. Its inartistic character is a guarantee of its genuineness. Anyhow, the picture is a real one, and a keen eye will be able to decipher the Hebrew tablet in the background, which identifies the scene. Moreover, the photograph, such as it is, is at least a triumphant testimonial to the brilliancy of the light in the deepest recesses of a Palestinian city interior.

[*See page 130*]

OLD PEOPLE'S REST AT JERUSALEM

For those whose European eyes cannot decipher the Hebrew it may be at once stated that this is the likeness of a group of inmates in the מושב זקנים, or "Old People's Rest," at Jerusalem. They are assembled in the principal room of the institution—assembled for prayer—but, in accordance with our good old Jewish custom, they are "learning" before they pray. The saintly-looking veteran in the centre is Rabbi Kaddish Halevi from Wolkowisk. Though a comparatively young man of seventy, he is, in more respects than one, the head of the Yeshibah, or Institution. He has sixty-five male colleagues and forty-seven female. Many of them are over eighty years of age. One good old dame, Madame Breina Spira, from Zoslauv, is over ninety-seven years old, Daniel ibn Joseph Tuil, of Smyrna, is ninety-two, and Salem Rosanawski, of Kishinew, ninety. The tall, emaciated-looking man standing in front of the curtain of the Ark is a smith, Abraham Skalir. The previous occupations of the men are all detailed in the annual report of the institution. Three of the men were colonists, one a doctor, several teachers, Shochetim, builders, tailors, peddlers, a brass worker, an אורג ציצית, "weaver of fringes," and so on. One pleasing but very Russian feature about the charity is that connected with it we find not a Soup Kitchen, but a *Tea* Kitchen. For two hours after nightfall every applicant is entitled to a glass of hot tea gratis, and there are four hundred glasses or so dispensed every night—a happy form of benevolence which dimly recalls the generous food doles of the mediæval monastery and convent.

What strikes one most about the inmates is the refinement and intellectuality of their features. It is a

workhouse, where aged failures in the struggle for existence are entertained, free of expense. Here they are permitted to pass away in peace. Not here will we meet with degraded types of the European inebriate or jail bird. Nor is there any thing characteristically Jewish about the appearance of our friends. In fact, there is no place like Jerusalem, where all nations meet, for convincing one of the fact that there *is* no characteristic type for the Jewish countenance. The old man at the corner of the table, fourth to the right of R. Kaddish, could sit as a model for Tycho Brahé, the man behind him looks like a Moor of Venice, and some of them are just Moujiks and nothing more. But they are all representative of one very fascinating aspect of Judaism, which it is the fashion to doubt or decry. It is not only in India that the Yogi, or contemplative Sage, is to be met with, who, having fulfilled his whole duty as a man, retires from active life to meditate on the here and the hereafter. We have our Jewish Yogis even outside the dazzling effulgence which emanates from the Zohar. Such an one was our dear friend Mr. Zimmer, and of such is the bulk of the Moshab Zekeinim. They work not, neither do they spin, but the world is better for their being in it, even if not of it. It is refreshing to think that not everybody is in a hurry, not everybody busy money-getting or money-spending, and that a few there are who, like the tertiary creatures still to be found in the Jordan as living fossils, are survivals of bygone and more tranquil ages.

The present position of the building is just where one would expect to find it. It is in the oldest part of the city, near the Meidân, and about two minutes' walk

from the chief Ashkenazi synagogue, which is built on the חורבת ר' יהודה החסיד, the "Ruin of R. Judah the Pious." It occupies two sides of its narrow lane—in Jerusalem proper there are no streets. On the one side is the men's house, the property of the institution and registered as "wakf," or charity property. The women occupy the quarters opposite, but their house is merely hired. Still it has the advantage of possessing a fine view of the Temple area from the roof. Fine, however, as is the position from the sentimental point of view, the site is necessarily not salubrious, and although our old people seem to thrive, they would have more fresh air outside the city. There we have the real "New Jerusalem," and there the Jew's heart must warm within him when he sees the neat clusters of trim little stone houses, which have grown up as if by magic in the last decade. There are many such clusters now from the quaint rock dwellings of the Troglodyte men of Yemen, which overhang the valley of Hinnom, to the neat cottages of the Sir Moses Montefiore Testimonial Committee's, Building Societies.

Street nomenclature is in its infancy in the East and therefore picturesque. "The Right Hand of Moses" and "Nathan's Village" now replace the squalid huts of the squatters who had to be turned out of the Montefiore Garden seven years ago. They constitute a very creditable approach to the city as one leaves the railway station, and I was told that the sight of their Sabbath lamps gleaming out of a hundred windows on a Friday night was the prettiest thing to be seen from the Lechmere Hospital opposite. "A Hundred Gates," and "Montefiore Memorial," "The Gate of the Corner

"Stone," "Moses Gate," "The House of Israel," "Rechoboth," "The Inheritance of Seven," "Stone of Israel," and "Tabernacle of Peace," are some other names that bring us by easy stages to the country end of the Jaffa Road. Here, close by the watch tower, which marks the uttermost end of outer Jerusalem, for a Turkish Octroi allows no dwellings on the wrong side of the guard, the Moshab Zekeinim has purchased a plot of eleven thousand square metres, and commenced a new building after the model of the *Altervérsorgungsanstalt* in Berlin. It was induced to do this by the munificent promise of thirty-five thousand roubles from a Russian millionaire. But the millionaire was litigious, and after he had paid five thousand roubles, behold, the High Court of Justice at St. Petersburg placed a *distringas* on the whole of his property, and he cannot continue payment. And so the building is stopped for the present.

Perhaps the best plea for the Moshab Zekeinim is a quotation in the *ipsissima verba* of its managers' "petition to pious Ladies and gentlemen" which, though its English may be halting, is in sentiment irreproachable. "It is beyond our power," they write, "to sustain all its wants. God knows we have done the utmost it offers, but we must now appeal to the generous and pious for aid. Have compassion, Pious Folk, and take part in the meritorious subject. Please obtain for yourselves memberships of this society by paying the member's fee and the reward for your piety and generosity will be exceedingly large in this world and in the world to come. . . . Please grant your support to this society, and the Almighty will grant fulfilment of all your desire and will permit you to

live and rejoice in the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem.

"Who of you, Brethren, does not feel for the old and feeble, poor and helpless, who have none to look after them, no one to care for them, who would eagerly wish to spend their last days on earth in prayers and study of the holy Torah in the holy city of Jerusalem were there but a corner to receive them."

The New

A very different picture, but in its way quite as satisfactory, would be presented by a portrait group of teachers and scholars of the Lionel de Rothschild School at Jerusalem. The contrast is an invigorating one, for youth is always more cheering than age. Here we would find no poky interior, but a substantial modern building with European windows and shutters, and neat wooden palings and the olive tree to supply local color. Nothing but the fez, which marks the official element throughout the Sultan's dominions, would distinguish the group from a European one of similar character. The very bars across the windows would only be witnesses to the fact that boys will be boys even in Palestine, and just as the ground-floor windows that "give" on College "Back" in England protect the student from themselves, so is the "interne" of our school protected from unlicensed evasion.

The physiognomies of the students vary more even than those of their elders in the Moshab Zekeinim. And necessarily so. For in the Technical School we find a heterogeneous assembly of different nations, and happily of different creeds. Jews can well be proud of the fact that in the hotbed of religious fana-

ticism, they were the first to throw open their doors to all religions, and Mohammedan and Christian alike testify to the excellence of the work of our Jewish schools.

The young men now learn the trades of blacksmith and joiner, locksmith and mechanic, coppersmith and brass founder, sculptor and carriage builder. It is a veritable university of technical education. It draws its pupils from Palestine and Turkey, and Russia and Roumania and even Greece; and it sends them back, when they have passed through their apprenticeship, to Egypt, to the Palestine Colonies, such as Rishon and Pethach Tikvah and Samarin, to Belgrade, to Cyprus, to Rhodes, and even to Marseilles; and wherever they go they earn a decent living by the work of their hands. In Jerusalem itself the work they do is indispensable. The upper stories of the hospital and hotel there are fitted with a water supply entirely made by the pupils. They have constructed steam-engines and pumps and all the mystic paraphernalia of modern sanitation. Certainly some parts of a ten-horse power engine which was shown to me were made of brass instead of iron, but that was because we have not yet an iron-foundry there.

The Technical School cannot at once make handicraftsmen of all our Oriental co-religionists, but its pupils are already spreading afield throughout the East and disseminating love of work and respect for the school among distant Jewish communities. I have myself come across young men trained there who are now earning decent livelihoods as artisans, not only in Palestine, but in Cyprus, and even in Egypt. For the rest, thanks largely to English philanthropy, the num-

ber of workshops is constantly increasing, and their efficiency is growing more and more marked.

Nowhere is the prejudice that Jews will not work with their hands so rapidly becoming antiquated as at Jerusalem. Convents and mosques, hospitals and churches, villas and hotels, all are dependent on the Technical School for the provision of fitments to supply them with the appanages of civilization. The folding doors of the Convent of St. Joseph move so smoothly and look so smart that they would do credit to the most efficient cabinet-makers of London or Paris. There are carved book-cases at the school made on the premises and by the scholars which would rouse a bibliomaniac to envy.

But a single instance will perhaps evidence more vividly than any mere words the moral benefit derived from the existence of such an institution in Palestine. When I reached Jerusalem, I was informed that its scholars were actually manufacturing iron gates for the tombs of the Patriarchs at Hebron, and that the gates had been ordered by the Sheikh and his Ecclesiastical Board, who were pressing for delivery. Now, as has been said before, if there is one thing more sacred than another, or more jealously guarded by the Turk, it is this Mosque which is erected over the Cave of Machpelah. Hardly half a dozen Europeans have been allowed to visit it. The last occasion—but one—was when the Dukes of Clarence and York went there with Major Conder. They obtained the requisite special firman from the Sultan, and a regiment of soldiers to protect them, and yet there was a riot in the narrow white lanes of Hebron when they entered the Mosque.

Well, I was allowed, with two Moslem pupils, to

penetrate there disguised as a mechanical adviser to our school. I wore a tarbouche and carried a measure in my hand, and some bottles of gilding wherewith to make beautiful the gates we had brought with us and were about to set up. I dared not talk for fear of betraying myself as a very ordinary tourist, but before we were accorded admittance, a preliminary palaver with the Sheikh of the Mosque was necessary, and, with the greatest solemnity in the world and with Oriental gesture, I had to vehemently negative the idea that the gilding would come off in the rain.

I visited also the Evelina de Rothschild School for girls, and the admirable Villa which the Association had just acquired from the Latin Patriarch for its new premises. Mdlle. Fortunée Behar, its energetic *directrice,* was determined to conduct her school on English lines. Mahanaim, as the Villa is called, was built five or six years ago by the bankers Frutiger, and inhabited by them till they left Jerusalem. Its windows command an ideal view of the Mosque of Omar, and the Temple area, and the Mount of Olives. Its garden is full of fine trees, and its wells more than amply supplied with water. Both timber and water are valuable commodities at Jerusalem, and will somewhat compensate for the increased cost of maintenance of the school. Little, if any, alteration is needed in adapting the interior for school purposes, and my friend, Mr. Richardson, one of the Surveyors to the Board of Trade, went over the premises, and was satisfied as to their being in a good state of repair. There were difficulties as to title, but these have, I understand, been now circumvented, if not overcome. What difficulties there had been were evidently due to a very real jealousy on the

part of the Turkish officials, with regard to the ever-increasing influence and number of Jews in Palestine.

The *Alliance* schools at Jaffa, for boys and girls, also call for praise. Jaffa has become almost a Hebrew port. The shop-fronts are crowned by Hebrew names and sign-posts. The market is a Jewish forum, and the very infants speak Bible Hebrew. There are few things more touching to the Jew returning to the land of his forefathers than to find his little co-religionists doing their lessons in Hebrew, aye, even prattling in it, as a very living language—the language of play.

SALONICA

Synagogues — A Kippur Siesta — The Talmud Torah — Inscriptions and Manuscripts — The Donmé — Volo.

SYNAGOGUES

I ARRIVED at Salonica on Friday, the 23d September, 1898, and attended the synagogue on Sabbath, the 24th, as early as twenty minutes to seven, and already the Sepher was being read. On the morrow, Selichotlf began at midnight and the whole service was over at three in the morning! Minchah went on all through the afternoon of Erev Yom Kippur. To make up for the excess of prayer, Olympus frowns in front of my window, and reminds me that all the world is a huge Pantheon.

Most characteristic is the marble flooring in these Shools. The seats are movable benches, and sometimes chairs. The Sicilians possess quite gorgeous purple or crimson armchairs with קליה or the donor's name embroidered on the back with plenteous gold. But each form is but the evidence that years ago the Salonicans, like the Persians of to-day, squatted on the ground as they prayed. Accommodation for the female synagogue-goers was none too abundant. The galleries, or corners reserved for them, are scrupulously trellised or curtained off from the indiscreet gaze of the opposite sex. They were just like the Shelters provided for the Harem beauties in the theatre boxes at Cairo. But I did not hear that the morals of the general public are thereby

improved; *au contraire.* But I am bound to say that the richer kind of Salonica Jewess, who has abandoned such Orientalisms, "enjoys" a worse reputation than her sister. The Jewesses are not ugly. The national costume is becoming—a flat cap terminating in a broad green (occasionally red) sash about a foot long and six inches wide, with a white lace tunic something like the Angelica-Kauffmann bodice.

CATALAN SYNAGOGUE AT SALONICA

Of all the synagogues that of "Arragon" seemed the most picturesque. It is large, and the Almemar is a lofty dais at the extreme west end, gallery high. The Ark is also highly placed, and many elders sit on either side on a somewhat lower platform. "Italia" was more striking, for the synagogue is but half-built, the floor not yet bricked in, and the galleries of rough lathes, and yet the women climbed up the giddy steps of the scaffolding, and the hall was full of worshippers. The sacred appurtenances were

borrowed from diverse Chevras, and, of course, there were lots of lofty thirty-hour candles. At "Fakima Modianos" these Kippur-lichts were Europeanized by having donors' visiting cards neatly attached to them with silk ribbons, as is our way with floral offerings. At none of the Shools, except the Ashkenaz, was there any prostration either for the Abodah or for Alenu, but there was Duchan for all services except Minchah. R. David Pipano preached for ten minutes before Neilah, of course in Ladino. Indeed, the amount of Ladino introduced into the service was quite astonishing. Most of the Techinnoth, Confessions, and Selichoth were in the vernacular, and the Reader seemed really moved as he held forth in that language, but his audience seemed less impressed.

A Kippur Siesta

At all synagogues and Chevras except the Ashkenaz, there was a grateful interval of two hours between Musaph and Minchah, during which time some (e. g., your humble servant) retired for a siesta, but many flocked to the *cafés,* which were filled with a crowd that eagerly discussed Colonel Picquart's punishment, but neither smoked nor drank. At service time the streets were deserted. More than half Salonica's eighth of a million are Jews, and three-quarters of the trade is in their hands. All the boatmen of the port are Jews, and on Saturdays no steamer can load or discharge cargo. Porters and shoeblacks, bricklayers and silk hands, are all Jews. The Ashkenaz ritual is like the Northern Italian, the pronunciation Sephar-

di, and the congregation more noisy and vehement, but to me hardly more familiar than the rest. I am bound to admit that I did not visit it during the siesta interval. Everybody is "called up" on Kippur. The three last verses of the fourth portion are repeated over and over again to each member in turn. This is the Shura, and is a lengthy business, which gave one plenty of time. One local characteristic of the service is the insertion into the אבינו מלכנו of a prayer against שריפה (fire) as well as מגפה (plague). Fire is more dreaded than the plague. Zunz and Steinschneider bewail the conflagrations at Constantinople and Adrianople as the worst of the enemies to Jewish books, but Salonica has suffered even more, and the fire of 1890 devastated half the town. On Tuesday (September 27th) I again peregrinated it, book-hunting and taking notes. Bad luck was still my portion, the answer constantly repeated was, "we had books, but they were burnt."

The Talmud Torah

The Talmud Torah is still in ruins, but the Baroness Hirsch has promised to give sixty thousand francs toward the cost of rebuilding in modern style, if the community will find the rest. The insurance companies had to pay fifteen thousand as their part of the loss, but there is still a heavy deficit. The Grand Rabbi, Carlo Allatini, the Modianos, Fernandez, Saïas, Misrachi, Auzolle, R. Jeuda Nehama, even the British Consul-General, Mr. Blount—everybody begged me to use my good offices with the Anglo-Jewish Association to get them to help. And really it seems a case where a slice of its School Construction Fund should

be available. After the Baroness' generosity. they must not ask anybody else in Paris.

But there is a humorous side to the question. It reminds one of the story of the Galician father who was so very depressed. "What is the matter?" asked his friend. "I have promised my daughter's young man a Nedan of five hundred gulden, and there are

THE TALMUD TORAH AT SALONICA

still two hundred and fifty I cannot find." "What nonsense! If you have promised five hundred, he won't expect more than two hundred and fifty, so you are all right with your two hundred and fifty." "Ah! but it is just that two hundred and fifty which I am wanting." . . . It is a dreadful pity that the Talmud Torah Building was destroyed. It was one of the most ancient and authentic in the community.

Inscriptions and Manuscripts

Two Hebrew inscriptions still remain *in situ* by the well of the courtyard which I managed to photograph. Two others have been removed to the Rabbi's house. One is of 1752 and the other of 1624. The last has special interest, because it commemorates Noah Cohen Ashkenazi. The following is a copy:

שנת ה'ש'פ'ד'
גל ה' צדקתו ברה כחמה שבעתים
נח כהן אשכנזי זה פעמים
אשר שקל הכסף במאזנים
לבנות מגדל עז לשם שמים
ונמצא דמיו על קיר לתת לו פי שנים
לאות על אבן אחת שבעה עיניים

The sum total of my spoil from Salonica actually represents a negative value! There are three MSS., of which only one is oldish, but uninteresting—a fifteenth century doctor's *vade mecum.* The other two are quite modern—Scriptural expositions in passable Hebrew, by a Greek proselyte, Rabbi Abraham ha-Ger, about sixty years old, and the other, a similar work, politely forced upon me by the author's grandson. The printed works proved my pitfall. Dr. Berliner proclaimed, in the *Hebräische Bibliographie* some months ago, that he had two pages of a mysterious edition of the Talmud, which he had abstracted from a Salonica binding.

In the Cairo Genizah I found a large fragment of fifty pages of Berachoth of the same edition, and we laid the flattering unction to our souls that this was a Salonica *incunabulum.* Unfortunately, a complete copy of Baba Meziah has turned up of the same edition,

but with a title page. And now it appears that it was printed only in 1706. The printers boast that fresh letters were actually cut for this same edition, but it was really nothing to boast of, for the print is vile, and, indeed, so bad that a sympathizer to whom I had shown my fragment had hopefully suggested that it might turn out to be a unique specimen of Hebrew wood-block printing. But *magna est veritas,* and it is nearly three centuries too late.

The Donmé

One historical fact about Salonica is interesting. When Sabbatai Zevi turned the heads of Oriental Jews and others in 1666, and created so much commotion that even Oldenburg, the founder of the Royal Society, wrote to Spinoza for his candid opinion about that *soi-disant* Messiah, the Salonica Jews caught the craze very badly, and a large number followed their hero in his conversion to Islam. They became Turks to outward show, and to this very day their descendants, of whom there are said to be two hundred and fifty families in the city, are known as Donmé, or converts. I saw them smoking outside their open shops on Saturday, but was assured that they were crypto-Jews, and practice all they can of Judaism at home. They do not marry with the Turks, by whom, indeed, they are viewed with much suspicion. I spoke to one of them in Hebrew, and he evidently understood, though he protested he was a Turk. Such an one had taught at the *Alliance* schools, and sent his sons there. And there is documentary evidence about their existence. There is a *Responsum* about them in the שו"ת of R. Joseph David, the Grand Rabbi who died in 1737, and

whose בית דוד was published three years later. And there is another *Responsum* about them in the ס' דברי שמואל published at Salonica in 1891, in which Rabbi Cobo's predecessor, R. Raphael Samuel Arditi, describes on page 240 how he adjudicated on a question put to him by ג' כתות של בעלי אמונה, "three bands of the faithful." The faithful, however, are otherwise known as heretics or מינים, and I was positively assured that the late Rav meant by them none other than these extraordinary Donmé.

Volo

The ill-wind that brought no direct boat for Athens enabled me to spend an hour at the Volo synagogue and school, to have a chat with R. Mosé Pesakh, its communal factotum, and steal a peep at the local Genizah. The synagogue, like the community, is only thirty years old, and its waste-paper basket is proportionally modern. I found there a Larissa Kethubah of 1851, fragments of an old Salonica Psalter (xx-cxlv), and a Sephardi prayer book, and in Ladino a History of France (!), and an address in honor of the late Dr. Mosé Allatini. Praise is also therein incidentally bestowed on those other two Salonica worthies, the Baron and Baroness Hirsch, portraits of whom, by the by, I saw in several poor homes at Salonica. From a grocer at Volo, I bought a Greek and Hebrew prayer book and Ethics (Aboth) printed in 1885 and 1886 at Corfu. Rabbi Mosé told me that there were about one hundred and fifty Jewish families at Volo, and about the same number at Larissa, though there had been twice as many before the Russo-Turkish war. Larissa Jews were being

molested by the hillmen of Epirus, out of revenge for their Turkish sympathies, but the Volo Jews were under no discomfort. Volo is a sea-port and has consuls, to which fact, indeed, it owed its immunity from all damage during the Turkish occupation.

SMYRNA

The Home of Sabbatai Zevi — Young Israel — A Dramatic Performance — Magnesia — A Wonderful Manuscript — Bounar Bashi — Rhodes — Mersina.

The Home of Sabbatai Zevi

The earlier days of Succoth I spent at Smyrna. To school-boys it is known as the first of Homer's seven birthplaces, but to Oriental Jews it is famous as the birthplace of Sabbatai Zevi, the Zionist and false Messiah of two hundred years ago. His father and uncle died here in 1666, and the following was given me as their epitaphs. For obvious reasons, I did not copy them myself.

The Father Mordecai Zevi

דבק בתורת אל ובמצותיו
ירא וסר מרע כל ימותיו
קדמו פניו צדקותיו
בגן ערן יחליץ עצמותיו
מצבת קבורת הישיש נבון ונעלה
כהר מרדכי צבי נ״ע׳
נפטר יום ד׳ ה׳ לחודש
ניסן שנת ה׳ ת׳ר׳

The Uncle Isaac Zevi

דבק בתורת אל ובמצותיו
ירא וסר מרע כל ימותיו
קדמו פניו צדקותיו
בגן ערן יחליץ עצמותיו
מצבת קבורת חכם ונבון נעלה
כ׳מ׳ה׳ יצחק צבי נ״ע׳
נפטר יום ב׳ לחודש שבט
שנת ה׳ ת׳ר׳

I was told that a local and contemporary Hebrew almanac had appeared with a rude wood-cut, showing Sabbatai Zevi seated on the throne of David (? Solomon) as king of Israel, but I was not able to find a copy!

There are four large and five minor synagogues

here. As a stranger I went to that of the אורחים first, and here I was fortunate enough to find the venerable Chief Rabbi, the Chacham Bashi, R. Abraham Pelago. He is a fine-looking man, with a long white beard, and his age is variously given as ninety, ninety-three, and ninety-five. His conversation is bright and animated—in Ladino by preference. But he talks Hebrew fluently, and has written eighteen books in that language, some of them in poetry. He offered me sweet-stuff made of quince, and some sort of Marzipan to eat and mastic to drink, and made me a present of the Machzor Romania. He could never hope to attain his father's quantity of bookmaking, for his father was still sixty books ahead, and "I am an old man now," he said. Apropos, he is not the first of what I may call the Archipelagos, for his father, R. Chaim Pelago, had been Arch-Rabbi before him. The natives naturally hold them both in the highest esteem, and tell a story about the father which surpasses that of Newton's dog Diamond. There was a great conflagration in Smyrna in 1822 (there have been several since), and in the fire R. Chaim lost fifty-four of his manuscript compositions. He did not despair, but re-wrote, and afterwards printed and published every one. I am bound to say that Rabbi Abraham is not responsible for this wonderful story. But there can be no doubt as to the fecundity of authorship in both. It was an impressive sight to see the old man mount the lofty Tebah when called to the Law, and afterwards bless the congregation at the conclusion of the service as they filed past him, young and old, kissing his hand, which he then laid on their head saying, חזק וברוך. He was the last to leave the synagogue with his

Meshareth, upon whose arm he leaned, walking with swift strides, but bowed with age. He looked like Irving's Cardinal Wolsey—his stature just as tall, his flowing robes quite as picturesque, his environment perhaps a little more "stagey."

Young Israel

The *Alliance* schools were, of course, having their vacation. They are ably directed by M. Arié. The buildings are very suitable, with plenty of air, and not too much light. The boys' school was once the Governor's Konak, the girls' was specially built for them. English is taught to the boys, but many of the leading citizens think that English would be useful to the girls. Two or three intelligent young men told me that they would like their sisters to be able to talk English. The British colony at Smyrna is a large and desirable one—perhaps a couple of thousand. Clerkships in English houses are freely given to *Alliance* pupils. French, or rather France, is now at a discount, by reason of the Dreyfus affair, but Young Israel is passionately devoted to England because it treats Jews so well. Other synagogues are "Portugal" and the "Great." The Yeshiboth, of which that of R. Hillel and of R. Hai Gagin seem the most important, are generally owned by individuals, usually the sons or descendants of Rabbis. The books are neither particularly old nor interesting. Liturgies are conspicuous by their absence, Responsa predominate. With a single exception, I met with unvarying courtesy, and was allowed to look at the books as much as I liked. The exception, I am sorry to say, turned out to be the most influential, or, anyhow, the most dreaded man in the

place. It was Levi Bechor, a septuagenarian, who got quite cross when I asked him to show me his manuscripts. He told me he had none, and would not show them if he had, because thirteen years ago an Englishman (?) had come to him, and after being right royally fed, had repaid his hospitality by walking off with two MSS. I pleaded that I was not responsible for that misdeed, but he was inexorable, although he did give me some sweets instead. Levi Bechor is by profession an astrologer, or fortune-teller. He is highly esteemed by the Turks and also, I am sorry to say, by our co-religionists. He charges two or three hundred francs a consultation, and has been summoned to Constantinople on business, and eagerly admitted into the Serails there. If anybody loses anything, Bechor is the detective who is expected to discover the thief, and I was told an extraordinary instance of his sagacity. A purse was lost containing money, and the servants rushed off to consult him. He didn't exactly find the purse, but he convinced everybody of his supernatural powers by declaring that it was a *red* purse that was stolen, and this was, indeed, the case. It's very unlucky he didn't take to me. I don't know what ill-luck is consequently in store. Perhaps a calamity could be averted if I could get for him a call to Scotland Yard.

A Dramatic Performance

The (Salomon de) Rothschild Hospital is close to the *Alliance* schools. The women's side had been quite deserted the day before the Festival, but there were several men in the wards. One poor boy had hurt his leg by a fall, and undergone an operation. He was a

brave little fellow and hardly winced when the bandages were changed, though he was evidently in much pain. Another patient was in the last stage of consumption. On the Monday night an amateur dramatic performance took place in the courtyard of the hospital. The actors were ex-students of the *Alliance,* the piece, *La grammaire française.* The tickets were in Ladino—old Spanish in Hebrew letters. The following is a transliteration of my ticket into Latin characters: "No. 592—Representacion Teatral—Noche dj Lunes, 17 Tishri—Al profito del Ospedal 'Rothschild'—Bilieto di Intrado—Presio Medio Medjid." The piece was funny, and not badly acted, but a deafening brass band made the intervals between the acts quite a torture, and one couldn't help thinking of the unhappy patient dying upstairs.

Magnesia

On the Monday I went to Magnesia, another famous city of antiquity. But neither a colossal statue of Cybele on Mount Sipylus, nor some wonderful prehistoric chambers (tombs?) cut in the solid rock a few miles off, could restore the illusions, which vanished as one bumped along in a Smyrna and Cassaba Railway carriage. There are about two thousand Jews in Magnesia—less than a tenth of the number in Smyrna—but the *Alliance* schools are excellent. The boys' school was built *ad hoc,* the girls' used to be the house of the Greek Archbishop, and is therefore grander but, perhaps, a little less practical. In one of the rooms they are taught to make Smyrna carpets. These used formerly to be made only in the interior and by Turkish women. Jewesses had no means of

earning money, except the unsatisfactory one of assisting to gather in the grape and tobacco crops. The local Jews are delighted with this sensible innovation, and compete for the honor of sending their girls to the classes, but there is not room for a quarter of those who want to join. M. Alchalel showed me some of the carpets made in the school. They seemed admirable—all but one, into which a flashy European flower-pattern had been woven. A Smyrniote carpet merchant, M. Habib, the President of the Consistoire, or Communal Council, has contracted to purchase at market price all they can manufacture. The Consistoire, by the by, is a representative institution, elected by ninety-six electors, ten chosen by each synagogue and six by the Rabbis of Smyrna.

A Wonderful Manuscript

Magnesia has two synagogues—one about sixty and and the other twenty years old. In the latter are preserved two massive volumes of a Massoretic Pentateuch written at Barcelona in 1289 by the son of Reuben, the son of Todros (Theodore), for Zerachia ben Sheshet ben Zerachia. The old covers have been replaced by new ones of olive wood, and the margins have been thickly gilded. The writing is magnificent and the letters two centimetres long. I did my best to photograph a couple of pages. There is also a volume of the Prophets and Hagiographa in a different hand. These were probably brought to Asia Minor by Jewish refugees from Spain. But their local history is by no means so commonplace. It tells how that one day, many, many years ago, the River Hermus overflowed its banks, and the anxious by-standers noticed a huge

and ancient coffin floating down the stream. They tried to catch hold, but it eluded their grasp. Then the Greeks or Christians tried in their turn. Again in vain. At last the Jews were called, and they brought it to shore and landed it without the slightest difficulty. The coffin was opened and found to contain a skeleton and four volumes in characters which none could read but the Jews. The Turks gave the books to them, but kept the skeleton, which they buried with due solemnity in the Urum Jami, once a Basilike, but now a Mosque, at Magnesia. In the dead of night the Rabbi saw a vision, and, behold, the man appeared that had been thus honored, and declared that he had been no Turkish saint, but a pious Jew, and begged his body might be removed from unhallowed ground. Next night the Jews by stealth disinterred the stranger's bones and reburied them in their own God's-acre. And to this day that grave in Urum Jami is empty, though the Ishmaelites know it not. Anyhow the Jews had the four volumes, though one was taken away one night by a mysterious Ashkenazi, who had studied it day after day until the fatal evening when it and he both vanished. The cemeteries are certainly ancient, but though we dug there for some hours we were unable to find any Genizoth.

Bounar Bashi

On the Tuesday I went to Bounar Bashi (= Water Plenty), at the foot of the hills, a couple of hours' drive from Smyrna. Here there is a small number of Jews with a little synagogue and a Yeshibah, with a large collection of books formed by Hali Judah

Amado. His great grandson sold me about a dozen manuscripts, so that I didn't have my drive for nothing. I could not hear of any other Hebrew MSS., except a fragment of the "Tachkemoni" much damaged by fire and water, and a parchment "Guide of the Perplexed." The Greek Orthodox College, called Evangelical, possesses a museum in which there is a fine illustrated Greek MS. of the Septuagint to the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets with the Catena, probably of the eleventh century. There are two or three pictures on each folio—some of them very realistic. The forbidden birds are all pictorially represented, and the stoning of Achan is ghastly but instructive. The book belonged (?) to an Archbishop and was probably once in the monastery at Mount Athos. I also heard of some Abyssinian theological writings, which had been offered to the British Museum, but not been accepted.

Rhodes

On the 5th of October I was at Rhodes (רודים). In the city of that name, there are three thousand five hundred Jews, two synagogues, and five Chevroth, but no school. The community is very anxious that one should be established, and the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* has been in treaty with them on the subject, but so far without practical result. The oldest synagogue dates from the times of the Knights, or Chevaliers, and is about three hundred and fifty years old. Its shape is something like that of the ancient Toledo synagogue. There are three parallel aisles divided off by a double arch. In the centre aisle is a very high Tebah extending half-way across, and opposite it is the Ark let into the wall. To the ex-

treme left is a fourth aisle, separated from the main building by five latticed windows, and constituting a women's synagogue on the ground floor. This apparently failed to furnish sufficient accommodation for the fair sex (very fair, by the way, in Rhodes), and so a modern gallery has been recently added at the western end. The roof is flat, supported by a great many oak rafters black with age, the floor is a neat mosaic of black and white pebbles, and there is a skylight over the Tebah, raised a little so as to compensate for the elevation of the platform. The official head of the community is the Chacham Bashi, R. Moses France, but the acting head and Ab Beth Din is R. Moses Israel, the only instance, outside Russia, that I know of where the "Crown Rabbi" does not officiate *de facto*. The people are all clean and good-looking, and so are their streets. Black and white mosaics, by way of flooring, seem very common, and remind one of the space in front of the coastguards' cottages on the cliffs in England. As in Smyrna, all the Jews seemed to have Tabernacles of their own, erected in yard or on balcony, out of the slightest wooden framework, covered with white sheeting, roofed by bulrushes and myrtle branches, and sometimes decorated with paper garlands. No books to speak of in Rhodes—a couple of Yeshiboth—a little MS. Hebrew Bible, unpunctuated, belonging to M. Bohaz Ménaché, *Membre à la cour d'appel du Vilayet de l'Archipel.*

MERSINA

A few hours later the good ship "Venus" brought us on to Mersina, where Jewish people seem distinguished by their absence. There is just a Minyan,

no Shochet, but a Succah. Men come here without their wives and children, and eat no meat until they get home again. Pompeiopolis, out of the stones of which Mersina is built, doubtless contained more of our co-religionists. M. Cattegno, of Salonica, said that land was cheap, and cotton and wool and silk most plentiful, and he maintained that Asia Minor in general and Mersina in particular were better worth colonizing than the Argentine. And yet even at Konieh, the terminus of the great railway to Constantinople, there are no Jews, at Adana only one—the Judge of the Tribunal of Commerce—and at Alexandretta only fifteen families.

Alexandretta is the starting point of the caravan route for Aleppo, where there are at least ten thousand Jews and sundry "boutons."

ALEPPO

Situation — The Ghetto — The Aleppo Codex — The Genizah — Aleppo in the Middle Ages — Schools — A Lucky Find.

SITUATION

ALEPPO (in Arabic Haleb, in Hebrew חלב or חל׳פו, but generally ארם צובה or צובה, Aram Zobah, or Zobah alone, or abbreviated אר״ץ) can boast one of the most ancient Jewish communities. It is mentioned in the sixtieth Psalm, and though ten days' journey north of Damascus (see Ebn Haukal, the Arabian geographer of the tenth century, edit. Ouseley, p. 49) is traditionally regarded as the most northerly point to which a Palestinian Jew might journey without being regarded as a traveller. In marriage contracts (כתובות) made in the Holy Land, it is still stipulated that the husband should give his wife a conditional divorce, which comes into operation if he journeys to foreign parts. The southern limit outside which the Get commences to operate is Alexandria, the northern, Aleppo. This provisional divorce was a device intended to protect the wife from everlasting widowhood in case the adventurous husband did not return and was not heard of. Quite recently, the great Arctic explorer Nordjensköld resorted to the same expedient with regard to the wife he left behind him. The Jewish Law will not "presume" death in the case of an absent husband, however many years he may have been missing.

I chose the shortest way to Aleppo. This starts

from the port of Alexandretta (Scanderun), where there is a bare Minyan of Jews, and proceeds by way of the picturesque pass of Beilan (Pylae Syriacae). The road climbs, skirts the lake of Antioch, and crosses a weary waste of ancient ruins. This bridlepath is fifty miles nearer than the modern coach road, but is terribly wearisome and lonely. Carriages from Alexandretta take two to three days and nights to reach Aleppo.

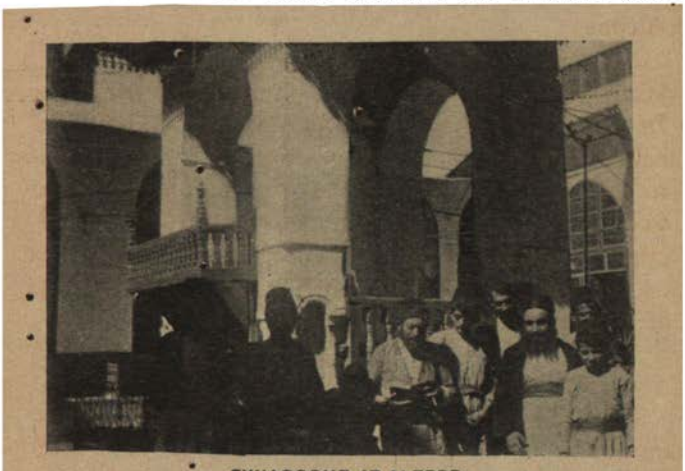
Aleppo is a walled city of much commercial importance on the road to Bagdad and Southern Persia. In Shakespeare's time, however, its importance was enhanced by the fact that it lay on the great trade route to India. Commerce is still the ground of its attractiveness to the Jew, who, despite the Aleppo boil and other discomforts, has always affected it at the cost of being despised by his more literary co-religionists of Damascus and Bagdad.

The Ghetto

The Jews of Aleppo still live in a quarter of their own, very much like an Italian ghetto, divided from the rest of the city by a gate, close to which there is an inscription in Hebrew dated Ab אתרם, i. e., 1349. The chief synagogue is very ancient and has many peculiarities. There are several modern additions to it, but the main structure is dated by the Abbé Chagnot as early as the fourth century. It has several inscriptions, some carved on its walls, others painted on them. One is as late as 1861, another as early as 834. The latter is on a chapel stated to have been erected by Mar Ali ben Nathan b. Mebasser b. הארם. The following is a copy of the inscription:—

זה הקבה בנה מר
עלי בר נתן בר
מבשר בר הארם
מיגיעו וממונו ש
תהלך צרקה לשט

Only four letters are starred, so that the date is probably 1145, sel. = 834. The local Jews, however, assume that all the letters count in the פרט, but that



SYNAGOGUE AT ALEPPO

no thousand is omitted, so that the date would be 654 sel., i. e., 345 of the common era! The letters are certainly very archaic, but, *pace* the Abbé Chagnot, so early an inscription should not be accepted as such without further evidence. There are several similar chapels surrounding the main building, evidently added from time to time, as the community grew. In each of these Minyan is separately held. A like arrangement exists in Bokhara, and traces of it still survive in the ancient Roman ghetto. The chief pe-

culiarity of the Aleppo synagogue is a raised pulpit called the כסה אליה approached by a flight of some twenty steps and still used for the solemnization of a B'rith Milah.

The Aleppo Codex

Of chief literary interest is a chapel to the extreme west behind the ארון הקודש with a stone sarcophagus and a vaulted roof. Local tradition has it that here the apparition of Elijah the Prophet had been seen, and it had saved the community during one of its numerous persecutions. In this damp shrine the famous Massoretic Codex, the pride of the Aleppo Jews, is reverently preserved. This is the so-called Codex of Aaron (Abu Said) ben Asher, supposed to have been written about 980. Dr. Wickes in his treatise on the accentuation of the twenty-one so-called prose Books of the Old Testament (Oxford, 1887) gives a facsimile of one of its pages, and proves that it was not written before the eleventh century. Dr. Ginsburg, however, in his Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (London 1897), ignores this scepticism, and quotes the colophons given in the אבן ספיר and in הצופה (numbers 47 and 48, Lyck, 1857). I examined the MS. carefully and have come to the conclusion that Wickes and Neubauer and other scholars are right and that it is only a copy of the original codex of Aaron ben Asher two or three centuries later.[1] The following are two other colophons in the MS. which are not quoted by any authority. I copied them because they throw

[1] See Neubauer, Studia Biblica. III, 24. *Révue des Etudes Juives,* XV, 316, and Ginsburg, op. cit. p. 242.

light on the problem how the MS. left the Karaites and became the property of the Rabbanite Jews of Jerusalem.

a קדש להי׳ על ישראל הרבנים השכנים בעיר הקדש
לא ימכר ולא ינאל לעולם ולעולמי עולמים

b קדש להי׳ על בעלי התלמוד השכנים בעיר הקדש

But this is not the only codex of which the Aleppo Jews can boast. In the same place is a beautifully illuminated Pentateuch in two columns written very large with the Haftaroth and Megilloth. Unfortunately it is much damaged by damp. Then there is another Massoretic Pentateuch with a colophon, קדש כה״ר אברהם דקדיש כה״ן בכיר יצחק כהן. But the gem of the collection is a fourth MS., also a Pentateuch, with the Hebrew Text and Targum written in alternate verses. It contains very copious Massoretic lists both at the beginning and the end. The colophon states that it was finished on the 15th Tammuz, 5101, i. e., 1341. There is a note beginning שמעת מה״ר אברהם מרומא, "I heard from Rabbi Abraham of Rome etc.," which points to an Italian scribe.[3]

The Genizah

Over the synagogue there is a Yeshibah, and, in a secret chamber in the eaves of the roof of one of the side chapels is the Genizah. This was as full of dust as the famous one at Fostat, but much less interesting or ancient. Almost all I found there was printed matter, and of this the most curious was the *Supplément au Journal hébreu le Libanon* of

[3] See Kaufmann, Memorial Volume, p. 131.

the 11th January, 1869, being an account in Hebrew of the annual meeting of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle,* at which M. Joseph Halévi gave the story of his famous mission to the Falashas. The Genizah is periodically emptied, and its contents are taken solemnly to the Jewish cemetery. Their burial is supposed to induce a downfall of rain.

Generally speaking, there are few MSS. of importance left in Aleppo. There is a כתר מצחף or (Massoretic Bible) finished in Kislew, 1367, belonging to M. Jarchi. But quite interesting is a reference to Cochin China in a manuscript of the ספר הקנה. The book itself was hardly worth buying. This is the colophon:—

נעתק זה הספר להנכבר ר׳ שמואל בן בכור׳ ר׳ הלל תנצבה השם יזכהו אמן וגשלם ... בערב שבת בין הערבים בשמונה ימים לחדש אב שנת הרנ״ז במדינת סינים חדתא דיעל כיף ימא רבא מותבא אני הכותב אברהם הספרדי בר׳ משה נע פרץ.

Samuel b. Hillel, for whom the book was written in 1497, seems to have been one of the first of the Syrian Jews to migrate to Cochin China. He thus establishes the fact that the Jews of Malabar and Aleppo have been in close relation for more than four centuries. Wessely in his edition of Abraham Farissol's ארחות עולם publishes, as an appendix, a letter by Ezekiel Rachabi to Tobias Boas, telling how his father came to Cochin in 1646. Aleppo, being on the trade routes between Europe and Asia, was equally familiar with India and Italy. In Italy many of its Hebrew books were published, notably the Ritual of the Aleppo Jews, recently described by Dr. Berliner in his *Aus meiner Bibliothek,* but which I sought in vain in Aleppo itself.

Aleppo in the Middle Ages

The traveller Benjamin of Tudela visited Aleppo in 1173, and Alcharisi about fifty years later. The former calls the citadel the Palace of King Noureddin, and says that, at the time of his visit, there were fifteen hundred Jewish inhabitants, of whom the chief were R. Moses el Costandini, R. Israel, and a R. Seth. The witty author of the "Tachkemoni" has much to say in praise of the Jews of Aleppo in Makamat 17, 47, 50, and especially 46. He calls it "the royal City, Aleppo the blest."

In his day, the leading Jew was Joseph Maghrabi Ibn Aknin, who in 1195 migrated from Europe by way of Egypt, where he became the friend of Maimonides, who wrote for him the "Moreh Nebuchim." Other men of light and leading were Azariah, and his brother Samuel, R. Nissim, the King's Physician Eleazer, Jeshua, Jachim Hananiah, and Joseph ben Hisdei, and many others. Of Aleppo poets, of whom he mentions Moses, Daniel, and Joseph, Alcharisi thought very little. The best was R. Joseph b. Zemach, who had good qualities but made bad verses. Their piety must have been extreme, for Eleazer is held up to scorn for having once travelled on the Sabbath, although it was at the king's command. In 1401, as appears from notes in contemporary MSS. in the Bodleian library, the Jewish quarter was pillaged, with the rest of the city, by Tamerlane; and a Jewish saint died there after fasting seven months! In the sixteenth century, Samuel Laniado b. Abraham, and in the seventeenth, Chaim Cohen b. Abraham were repre-

sentative authors. The "Mekor Chajim" of the latter was published at Constantinople in 1649 and at Amsterdam, by the famous Manasseh ben Israel, in 1650. Other Aleppo worthies are Isaac Lopes in 1690, Isaac Berachah in the eighteenth century, and Isaac Athia about 1810.

Schools

It is estimated that the present number of Jews is ten thousand, each of whom has to pay a poll tax collected by the communal chiefs. Besides various primary schools (תלמוד תורה), where only Hebrew and Arabic are taught, there is a boys' school founded by the *Alliance Israélite* in 1869 with two hundred and fifty pupils, of whom ninety-six pay, and a girls' school founded in 1889 with one hundred and ninety-five pupils, seventy-nine of whom pay. The costume of the Jewess resembles that of the natives, and is a long black cloak in which she is shrouded from head to foot, but she does not cover her face with a gauze veil like her Mohammedan sister. Her moral character stands high, but there was a troupe of singing girls from Damascus in the city, and some of these were Jewesses. One was a great favorite with the young people, whose enthusiastic shouts of *Kamane, Tera!* (*Encore, Esther!*) gave voice to their appreciation of her histrionic gifts. The girls at the *Alliance* school wear European dress. The Chief Rabbi Abraham Chalonei was degraded by the local Pasha in 1896, and replaced by a Vakil (substitute) Chacham Bashi, Salomon Safdieh. A Hebrew printing

press has existed for a few years in Aleppo, and I possess the rules of the Jewish Friendly Society, צדקה ומרפה, printed there in red letters in 1898. Everybody, and especially Raphael Silvera, treated me with much kindness, and I was sorry to leave them after only three days' stay. I confess to feeling some emotion when my hosts applied to me the ritual of the departing traveller. It was a pretty God-speed with which I was conducted forth from the city. Psalm cxxi was solemnly recited as a dialogue between the citizens and their departing guest. "The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in," was a sufficiently comforting message, and yet I felt as though I were officiating at my own funeral.

A Lucky Find

I felt the keenest disappointment at the poor results achieved after a systematic search for literary treasure in what—from a distance—seemed so rich a quarry. I had delved and groped in the recesses of the huge Genizah of the oldest and one of the largest synagogues now existing, but though the dust was more acrid, and the work far dirtier than that of Fostat, the matrix was modern, and the dirt not pay dirt. I left the ancient city discouraged and disgusted, but just as I reached the gate, a poor man hurried up with a bundle of pages which he offered me. I did not want to take it, but by way of polite negative offered him half a mejidieh. "It is yours," he cried, and passed me the bundle, which I accepted without enthusiasm, though with a sort of idea that it might serve as *Reiseliteratur.*

When, however, I came to examine it, I found that it was a veritable treasure-trove—better than anything I had voluntarily acquired. It turned out to be the unknown Divan, or rather a very large fragment of the Divan, composed by Elazar ha-Babli, an Eastern poet, probably of Bagdad, who was on terms of intimacy with the son of Maimonides and most of the other Hebrew worthies of his time.

THE SCHOOLS AT TETUAN

DURING a short visit to Morocco, in 1894, I had an opportunity of seeing and admiring the girls' and boys' schools of the *Alliance Israélite* at Tetuan. Notwithstanding the coincidence of Ramadán and Easter, which at Tangiers had been utilized to make a Jewish holiday, the schools were at work, and the pupils were busily and happily employed. The school buildings are well suited for their purpose, but essentially foreign to their environment. Instead of their native marble and brilliant azulejo tiles, the Tetuanese are here taught to admire the bricks and mortar of Marseilles. The building, I was told, was built by the French, and bodily imported from France, at a cost of eighty-thousand francs, although a third of that sum would probably have sufficed to adapt a Moorish palace to the requirements of a modern school-house. That such a model is by no means unsuitable is proved by the English school at Tangiers, which, with its open galleries on the upper floors round the centre atrium into which the school-rooms open, is more artistic but not less convenient than the most modern of London school buildings.

Such as it is, however, the boys' school at Tetuan is without question practically built. There is only one story; eight class rooms occupy two sides of a central courtyard planted with lime trees; lavatories take up a third side, and a library and the head-master's office and entrance occupy the fourth side. There is

a similar quadrangle for the girls, similarly planned out, and, of course, with a separate entrance, giving on the main and many-arched lane of the Mellah in which the Jews are locked up night and day. The head-mistress is Mdlle. Ben Simul, who, like one of her subordinates, has been well trained at the Ecole Bischoffsheim in Paris. The Director of the boys is M. Nissim Levy, who has occupied his post for about two years. He has six masters under him and three hundred and fifty-six boys, of whom one hundred and seventy-six, or just about half, pay school fees. Among the pupils are two Catholics and one Arab. Except in the lowest class the Spanish jargon, which is the vernacular of most of the Moorish Jews, is not spoken. French and Hebrew are the only languages taught. The circulating library, which for contents is beyond praise, cannot boast a single English book, not even a dictionary, but there are translations, into French, of Quentin Durward, and Kompert's Ghetto Stories, and Graetz's History of the Jews. The pupils are admirable French scholars, the only mistake they made in a somewhat difficult piece of dictation was a superfluous "s" in "leur." But it is questionable whether an English master would not be of advantage to the school. As it is, the only outlets for the Jewish emigrant from Tetuan are Algiers and Spanish South America. If the boys had a little knowledge of English, Egypt might provide a fresh field for their energies and ambitions. With the Hebrew instruction, which includes Rashi and Dinim, I was specially pleased. This is the less surprising, seeing that Tetuan is the seat of the Chief Moorish Rabbi, to whom the Jews of all Morocco and

even of Gibraltar appeal on questions of doctrine and dogma and ritual.

SPANISH COSTUMES OF JEWESSES IN ALGIERS

The girls' school comprises two hundred and eighty pupils, of whom only ninety-five can afford to pay. Three of them are Catholics, but there is, of course, no

Mohammedan little girl. Here, too, French is the language of authority, but I must confess to having been more interested in the class for dressmaking, where I saw a smart-looking Paris frock being built, in primary colors, for a Jewish bride. I sighed for the artistic draperies which our *émigrées* had brought over to Tangiers from Castile, but admired the furbelows of this century and the eagerness with which they were being adopted by our dark young sisters in 1894. The Anglo-Jewish Association and the London Council of the Morocco Relief Fund give this girls' school an annual subvention, and the money is well bestowed. English is less necessary for the girls than for the boys, but several of our co-religionists in Gibraltar have married their cousins on the other side of the Straits. The Tetuan schools were founded as early as 1862, and have for many years contributed more than their share of teachers to the various schools of the *Alliance Israélite*. They together cost only fifteen thousand francs per annum.

PERSIAN JEWS

Petrovsk — A Synagogue — Jewesses — Travelling in the Caucasus — Across the Caspian to Persia — Achalcig Jews — A Persian Gehazi — From Reshd to Teheran — The Maale Yehudiya — The Great Synagogue — Medical Practice — Siakal — The Sadr e Aâzam — Jewish Disabilities — Notables.

PETROVSK

FROM the Black Sea to Calcutta, from Bagdad to Kai-fong-foo, we meet with Persian Jews, that is to say, Persian in the sense that we in Europe are "German." They worship, or used to worship, in the Persian Rite; they speak Persian; they transliterate Persian into Hebrew characters; they have a Hebrew-Persian literature; and they hold a vague sort of tradition that they are descended from Persian ancestry. Their Hebrew-Persian literature, however, is almost unknown, and as late as October, 1895, the learned Dr. Neubauer, with all his scholarly accuracy, could write only in a tentative sort of way: "It is certain that the Persian Jews had a ritual and literature of their own, which we at present know only through a few MSS. of the Bibliothèque Nationale, the British Museum, and in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg."[1] Bible manuscripts apart, there are, in all

[1] See Dr. Neubauer's article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, viii., 139, on the "Jews in China." The same authority, in his monumental Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian, wrote in 1886, apropos of facsimiles, that "nearly all branches of writing are represented except the Persian square characters, of which the British Museum only possesses a single MS. of a late date written at Qum."

three together, barely a dozen volumes of such MSS. Dr. Neubauer's remark, made as it was apropos of those mysteries of civilization, the Chinese Jews, was especially startling because of its reminding us that the Jews of Persia were almost as great a mystery to us as their lost brethren of the far East. And yet they are so near that in something less than six weeks, and in two successive summer vacations, I have been able to visit them in their old-world homes of Teheran, and Samarkand, and Bokhara, and bring away a hundred manuscripts and more to fill up a gap in our literature, or at least in our libraries.

The roads to Turkestan and Persia do not diverge till one reaches the Caspian Sea. There are two great ports of embarkation, Baku, the City of Fire, and Petrovsk. Each is the terminus of a great line of railway. Baku ends the Transcaucasian Railway, which begins at Batoum and is only about a thousand miles long. Petrovsk has in the last two years become the end of the great trunk line of Russia three thousand versts further than Moscow. From Calais to Petrovsk takes about seven days. One travels overland throughout, and in Europe all the time. Only for a few hours in the last day does one get a distant glimpse of the great peaks of the Caucasus, rising out of the dead flat of the steppe. The rest is monotony exemplified.

Petrovsk itself is deadly dull. But the railway and the great oil discoveries at Grosni, a few hours off, have made it quite important as a commercial centre. Of course, where commerce is, our co-religionists are not far to seek. And so, though Petrovsk is many days' journey from the Pale of Jewish Settle-

•[See page 174]

A JUDÆO-PERSIAN MANUSCRIPT

ment, several Russian and Polish Jews are to be found there, all specially favored and graciously permitted to try to make a living in the new town. I must confess to some degree of trepidation in daring to ask after Jews in Holy Russia. I did so with bated breath and whispering humbleness. Most of the people I asked did not, or could not, tell me. At last I was directed to a shop which was closed, for it was Saturday. The shopkeeper did turn out to be a Jew, and with plentiful gesture, and language more voluble than intelligible, showed me the way to a little shed near the Bazaar, in the old town, where the Ashkenazi Jews were going to pray. Disappointed at finding a number of brethren in no way different from those to be met within hearing of Bow Bells, I asked in Yiddish whether there were no "Gorski Evraei" or "Achalcig Juden" in the place. "O yes," they said, "they are the oldest inhabitants, but we do not pray with them."

A Synagogue

After much persuasion an ancient congregant, short of stature, blear-eyed, and coated to the heels, undertook to escort me part of the way to the Shool of the "Gorski Evraei." *En route* he told me that his own synagogue had been burnt down some months previously, and they had nearly finished building a new one, and that the shed where I had found him was only a temporary house of prayer. He would not go all the way with me, but hurried back as soon as the Persian Shool was in sight. This turned out to be a small brick building, four-square and detached, with the Chazan's house and a courtyard adjoining. It

was a sort of miniature Bevis Marks, and about a hundred years old. The interior was bright enough—the walls were washed a light blue, a circular Almemar occupied the middle of the building. There were windows on three sides—one commanded the street and approach to the synagogue, another the mountains and the sea, and the third curtained off and concealed the dozen ladies or so who prayed in the adjoining passage. The fourth, or western side, was occupied by the Ark, which was festooned in green and surmounted by a crown, heraldically displayed over a shield with stag and unicorn by way of supporters. In the centre of the shield was its dedicatory prayer in memory of a lost son who had died in childhood. Eastern synagogues are full of such memorials. One such, an inscription carved in wood, is still to be seen in the ancient "Genizah" Synagogue at Cairo. The rest of the synagogue furniture consisted of very low benches with movable upright desks by way of lectern for each worshipper. The Shool door was, unnecessarily, protected by a Mezuzah, and on the walls hung a Russian and Hebrew calendar and a *Verzeichniss* of the holy places in Palestine, printed, alas, in Germany or for German use.

Jewesses

The congregation was distinctly picturesque. The dozen ladies who prayed in the passage adjoining supplied a good deal of local color. But their decorum was unimpeachable, for to avoid distracting the attention or even attracting the notice of worshippers of a sterner sex, they arrived after the men were all in

synagogue and left before service was over. And yet as they left the building, I noticed through window No. 1 many a fair Circassian looking backward even as their mother Eve on leaving Paradise. About fifty men were present. All wore the high black (or occasionally white) astrakhan fez, and half of them, especially the lads, were clad in the imposing national costume of the Caucasus, cartridges and all. They looked very neat and warlike with their long gray surtout, strapped tightly at the waist, a dozen cartridge pockets all in a row across the chest, and silver buckles and cartridge cases to add to the effect. They were all tall above the average, and their faces were distinctly pleasing. One or two of them might have stood for the model of Albrecht Dürer's portrait of himself, or masqueraded as bluff King Hal.

Travelling in the Caucasus

The Caucasus is a very meeting ground of nations. Its predominating dialects are Armenian and Turkish, but the indigenous Jews talk Persian to one another, and few know any Russian. Here, as elsewhere, Hebrew had to serve as our common language, and we got along well enough to understand one another. They told me that they talked Persian because they were the descendants of the Tribes of Israel whom Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, had carried away captive and "placed in Halah and in Habor by the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (II Kings, xvii.). The real reason is more probably the fact that till about a century ago the whole of the Caspian coast was under Persian sway. But the tradition is widespread among the Persian Jews and in the Cau-

casus that there have been many independent Jewish tribes until quite recent years. I was told that in an Armenian monastery near Kutais ancient records are preserved which conclusively prove that Jews were paramount in the country three or four centuries ago. Some were converted to Christianity, but many have remained loyal to our ancient faith, and these are treated by the Russians almost as kindly as are the Karaites of the Black Sea. The Rabbi-Ḳhazan, who seemed fairly intelligent, told me that he and his family and many of his flock were not natives of Petrovsk, but had come from Sura, a place in the hills about five hours' distance by "phaeton"—that ramshackle jolting car, which sounds so grand in English, but connotes so much discomfort in Russia. He said his people were poor, but were doing better since railway times. He introduced me to his only son, "the comforter," Menachem, as he was pathetically called, for all his brothers had died in childhood at Sura.

The service was conducted entirely by the Rabbi, the ritual was Sephardic, the prayer books were printed at Leghorn, Vienna, and Warsaw. Mitzvoth and עליות were auctioned as occasion arose. There were no Cohanim in the congregation, and I was called up both "Cohen" and "Levi." Two wardens, gloved in spotless white wool, held the Sepher, one on either side of the reading desk, but when the Reader reached the תוכחה (Deuteronomy xxviii. 15), the two silently disappeared from the Almemar, the Rabbi read the portion to himself in an awed voice, and at its close pronounced the full מי שברך for the whole congregation, which constitutes, as with us, part of the Sabbath ritual after יקום פורקן. Then the white gloves re-

sumed their office and the service proceeded, the מי שברך being repeated in its due place in the service. The pronunciation of Hebrew is half-way between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic. The Kametz is pronounced "*o*" and Cholem "*oi*," but the consonants are as pronounced by Portuguese Jews.

After service, a substantial looking burgher invited me to make Kiddush and break bread with him. The meal consisted of vodka, cucumbers, chilis, and fowl in rice. This was the Zakuska, then water was brought in for us to wash our hands, and מוציא was made over two big Challahs, which looked like huge prehistoric buns, very brown inside and out. Host, hostess, and children sat on the matted floor, but I was honored with a chair.

Across the Caspian to Persia

The steamer from Petrovsk to Baku generally calls at Derbend. This is a place famous for its ancient Jewish colony, and was visited by Tschorni, who describes it in his Travels in the Caucasus (ספר המסעות בארץ קוקז). I was not fortunate enough to be able to land and verify his remarks. But I have been in Baku three times, and spent several days there.

From the Jewish point of view, it is interesting quite apart from its mercantile aspects. In the immediate neighborhood is Ateshga, a famous Parsee Temple, where fire from the earth has been burning for twenty-five centuries. Naphtha springs are now the devout objects of pilgrimage to as many thousands of commercial travellers as to the Guebres, who used to come to pray at the sacred fire of Ateshga. Baku was taken from the Persians by Russia in 1806, and till

1872 the petroleum industry was a monopoly. In 1871 there was only a single drilled well in the whole Apsheron Peninsula; there are now several hundreds. In 1879 there were 15,604 inhabitants, principally Persians and Armenians. There are now a quarter of a million, of whom several thousand are Jews, although Baku remains nominally out of the Pale of Jewish Settlement. Several strata of Jews can be distinctly recognized, for they remain jealously and almost geologically apart. In the new—the business and uninteresting—quarter of the city, between the Docks and the Black Town, are the "Russian Jews," with two synagogues, two Kosher restaurants, and several Chevras. They do not invite comment, nor are they in any other respect inviting. Suffice it to say that most of them are materialistic and irreligious, without other ideal than money-getting, rapid, clever, unscrupulous. They have achieved their ideal and half the trade is in their hands. Many of them have purchased the favor of the powers that be, by submitting to baptism and becoming Orthodox. Some, not satisfied with a single conversion, have artfully doubled the process with a view to more effectual concealment of their origin. One man, the representative, alas, of a great Jewish house in Paris, became Roman Catholic first and then Greek Orthodox, and is doubly favored as being a "former Roman."

In the upper town, among the narrow wynds which cluster round the ancient minaret of the Persian Mosque, is a colony of Persian Jews, some indigenous and some birds of passage, trading between Reshd and Baku. They have no MSS. and few printed books.

But their little learning suffices to make their Hebrew intelligible. They are poor but not discontented. Their Minhag is that of the Italian printed prayer book. But they enjoy the proud distinction of being regarded by the Russians as indigenous "Gorski Evraei," or Mountain Jews. Baku is their headquarters, and they have communities and synagogues not only here and in Petrovsk, Derbend, and Grosni, but also in Kuba and Bakuba. And in Baku these Persian Jews told me something really extraordinary. Privolni is a sea-coast village between Lenkoran and Astara on Russian soil, and the whole of its inhabitants have lately become גרי צדק, proselytes to Judaism, and the Russian authorities have not said them nay, nor even imposed any disabilities upon them!

Achalcig Jews

The Achalcig Jews of Baku are Georgians and speak Armenian. Their wives and daughters are not bad-looking, but they hardly approach one's idealized anticipations of Circassian beauty. Their communities are to be found all through the Caucasus, at Tiflis the capital, at Schilvan, and Poti, and Kutais, but especially at Achalcig, their most ancient habitat, from which they derive their name. Kutais, near the Black Sea, is famous for an old monastery in which are said to be archaic records proving that the whole land around was at one time Jewish. In the synagogue there an ancient Massoretic Hebrew Bible is preserved with almost superstitious devotion.

The Achalcig Jews are good business men and keen travellers. One young man, Daniel Raphael

Manoah, from Kutais, boarded our train at Rostow, many days' distance from his home, and sold us silk shawls with a charmingly naïve insistence that would not be denied. The shawls were a great success as presents, and, from the pecuniary point of view, I must have made an excellent bargain with Manoah.

A Persian Gehazi

The mail steamer from Baku to Enzeli, the Persian port, from which Teheran is usually approached, takes about a day and a half and runs once a week in the summer and fortnightly in the winter. We just missed the boat, and, as the season was on the turn, could not risk waiting for a doubtful next, so we looked about for a cargo vessel. At last we heard of a little launch called the "Nena," belonging to a Persian merchant Aschurowa, and manned and officered by Persians. The ship agent warned us not to pay anything, for that we would be carried *pour nos beaux yeux*. But when the time for departure arrived, the wily owner who had relieved us of our passports, in dumb show suggested that he would like sleeve-links of foreign coin as a souvenir. We tried to pacify him with Turkish shillings, he would have none of them. Nothing but English sovereigns would satisfy his æsthetic taste. We were entirely in his hands, and so, Gehazi-like, he had his will, and thus obliged us to pay twice as much, and take twice as long as ordinary passengers by the mail. The "Nena" had been condemned as unseaworthy two years before we set foot upon her. She was certainly most uncomfortable; we had to sleep on the open deck, and for eight days our only distraction was to watch

the captain at his devotions, giving orders while prostrate on his prayer carpet. No further ablutions were permitted us than the pouring of water on our fingers from out of the spout of a kettle, and I got into serious trouble with the captain for venturing to sully a fire bucket full of sea water by the addition of a little soap. The passengers lay higgledy-piggledy before the mast.

We stopped at Astara and Lenkoran, and on the third day reached Enzeli. We were rowed up the lagoon by ten sturdy oarsmen for a couple of hours, and then reached Peri Bazaar, where the long ride begins which takes the traveller in four or five, and sometimes fourteen days to Teheran, by way of Reshd and Kazvin.

From Reshd to Teheran

By this short route Teheran can be reached in twelve days from London, if one is very lucky and manages to catch everything, fevers excepted. It means some days' riding "Chapar," changing horses two or three times a day. With our own horses, and the postboy's and an Armenian servant's and the luggage horse, we formed quite a picturesque caravan. But we were ever so much more picturesque than comfortable. As the Japanese Colonel, Y. Fukushima, said: "A 'Chapar' pony may have three, two, one, or no feet, but never four." The agony of its amble, after an inexperienced rider has been bumped on a Persian saddle for a dozen hours or so, surpasses belief. The only thing that supported one (the horses didn't) was the hope that some day *meminisse juvabit*. Well, the reminiscence, though

not tender, is at least painless, and the scenery on either side of the mountain pass which divides Reshd from Kazvin will certainly not be easily forgotten.

From Kazvin to the capital there is a wide road upon which carriages do—and with prudence can—drive. The coachman has to look out for holes, some of which are large enough to swallow up a four-in-hand. We were fortunate in that His Excellency the Saâd-es-Sultaneh, the "Arm of the Kingdom," Governor of Kazvin and Postmaster General of Northern Persia, was good enough, for a consideration, to let us have his own landau and four horses. His Excellency, whose Palace of Petunias is the show place of Kazvin, was literally our Persian Cook, for, not only did he serve as Tourist Agent to Teheran, but he had accompanied his Imperial Master, the late Shah, in his memorable visit to Europe, in the humble capacity of cook! His magnificent equipage, however, managed to bring us to the capital in fourteen hours, so that we arrived at break of day.

The Maale Yehudiya

Hardly allowing me time for a preliminary and unsatisfactory wash, a Persian nondescript in a uniform, half policeman, half soldier, and three-quarters beggar, took me to the Maale Yehudiya, or Jewish quarter, where he left me in charge of a Jewish lad. The small boy, wide-eyed with curiosity, escorted me through the intricacies of the quarter, from courtyard to courtyard, through many a gate, and past numbers of timid and suspicious Jewesses, till he brought me to the Synagogue of Ezra Cohen Zedek.

There are only about four thousand Jews in Tehe-

[See page 184]

SYNAGOGUE OF EZRA COHEN ZEDEK AT TEHERAN

ran, but there are fourteen synagogues, and every male Jew is a regular attendant at public worship in the early morning. It was not yet seven o'clock, but I found the congregants on the point of removing their Tallith and Tephillin. However, the will I had shown to join their service was taken for the deed, and I was thus better accredited than if I had had a thousand

JEWISH SCHOOL AT TEHERAN

introductions. They took me round to the Rabbi and other notables, and every day for seven days we spent much time in the quarter. We took the photograph one day when we were visiting the Talmud Torah School, which meets in the open air on a platform running parallel with the right-hand side of the synagogue and immediately outside. The Melammed,

the old man with the beard leaning against the pillar to the left, was seated cross-legged on the ground with a very long bamboo cane in one hand, while with the other he occasionally pulled the ropes of a hammock cradle slung across the end of the platform, and rocked its plump and dusky little occupant to slumbers, which the cane prevented its naughty brothers from sharing.

The teacher, despite his weapon of authority, was all sweetness and light to his Feringhee visitors, and scrupled not to allow some of his pupils to seat themselves on the synagogue floor in the attitude of prayer and himself sat himself amongst them, and boldly and seriously faced the camera. We hitched up the curtain to show the alcoves in which the Scrolls are placed. The picture also gives an idea of the narrow ladies' gallery on the left, the Oriental rugs on the floor, the movable wooden reading desk, and the characteristic round wooden cases, cloaked in Oriental embroideries, in which stand the Siphre Torah.

The Great Synagogue

The next illustration depicts another synagogue, the Great, which has at least some architectural pretensions. Beneath the floor there is a fascinating Genizah, damp and funereal. You raise a flagstone and lower yourself by the hands till your feet light on the crumbling and mouldy remains of the Hebrew wastepaper of a Persian century. What one finds there is neither old nor interesting, but then one shouldn't expect too much from even "a cycle of Cathay." The pillars are curiously grooved, the three figures seated on the step of the Almemar are typical Persian Jews, and the

Hebrew inscriptions over the alcoves are interesting. They represent the well-known text:—

> Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors!

THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE AT TEHERAN

Though the oldest of the Teheran synagogues, the Great cannot boast its century. The whole community is barely one hundred and fifty years old. The names of the Jews one meets reveal their origin from the ancient communities in the South. Such are

Kashani, Hamadani Yazdi, Isfahni, Dardashti. I came across only one Teherani, David Michael Teherani, the Banker, and he, like most bankers, was probably a *novus homo*. And yet Rhea, the ruins of which are within an hour's ride from the capital, is the ancient Rages, one of the chief cities of Media, and the home of the kinsman of Tobit, that exemplar of the old man of antiquity, the good father of a good son. Tobits are not common among the Jews in Persia nowadays, but they are still to be found even in *fin de siècle* Teheran. Such an one, Dr. Rosen of the German Legation there told me is his Hebrew teacher, the brother of Aga Meir Hamadani, of the Caravanserai Amir, a man of high ideals, and utterly unworldly. Such an one, too, is the old physician, Nour Mahmoud Hakim, as the natives affectionately call him, but whom his brethren know as Rabbi Nahurai.

Medical Practice

The Hakim is a keen, bright-eyed old man, with a snow-white beard. He looked the picture of Faust, or, perhaps, Maimonides himself, as he pored over some manuscript or other. Though an octogenarian, and a medico of quite the old school, his European colleagues of the most advanced type respect him as infinitely superior to the ordinary native Hakim. In fact they regard him as a mine of empirical knowledge, and even the Shah summoned him to his bedside. He possesses a fine little library of Persian, Arabic, and Hebrew manuscripts, mostly medical, and asked me to get him the Koran in Hebrew. His garden is a delightful storehouse of pomegranate, rose, and fig trees, and vines cluster round his courtyards.

The natives look up to him as something almost supernatural in his wisdom, and his sons shine by his borrowed light. They have the veneer of civilization upon them, for they spent six weeks in Paris, studying medicine as they told me, though the one was in bed nearly all the time, and his brother was overawed by the asphalt and the gas around him. One of them

SYNAGOGUE OF ASHER ROFÉ AT TEHERAN

allowed me to sit by his side one morning as he interviewed his patients. The sight was comical enough. He sat on the floor by the window in European garb, but with the high black Persian conical cap on his head. In front of him was a sort of chessboard with ointments and little phials. His doorkeeper brought the patients up to the window, and then ensued a whispered conversation which generally ended in the

patients' receiving a minute dose. To my uncultured eye it seemed that all the doses came from the same miraculous cruse, though evidently some were intended for internal application and others for external. Most of his *clientèle* were women, Shiite women, not Jewesses. They rarely unveiled, but it was funny to see a lean arm or a tiny tongue projecting from the Yashmak, and blindly seeking inspection!

Hakims are great men in Oriental communities, and it is not surprising to find synagogues dedicated to their memory. Such an one is that of Asher Rofé, the Dr. Asher of Teheran, of which I was able to get a photograph. The illustration may serve to give one an idea of a third and entirely new (or old?) type of synagogue architecture. Note the dark recess in the rear, with the door and window. This constitutes a sort of secret chamber, *arcanum* rather than Ark, in which the Scrolls of the Law are treasured. The high brick platform of the Mimbar, or reading desk, with its four wooden poles, is also quaint if not beautiful. The man to the left is a poor Dallâl Moussa, robed in blue cotton, who used to bring me a Kosher wild pigeon, stewed in saffron, every day; very tough, but Kosher.

Siakal

In an appendix to the 1897 report of the Anglo-Jewish Association (xxvi., 47) I gave a short statement of the educational needs of the Jews in Persia, how the Jews themselves begged their brethren in Europe to establish schools for them, and how the dignitaries of the State and the British and foreign diplomatists of Teheran supported their petition. Since

then, it is gratifying to learn, the *Alliance Israélite*, with the co-operation of our own Anglo-Jewish Association, has started schools there for boys and girls with great success and under most auspicious conditions.

The following is a translation of a letter about schools written and handed to me, one Saturday night, by a silk trader in Reshd as a message to my brethren in London. The original is not without interest for its Persian style and spelling, and the unconscious picture it presents of the low culture but high ideals of the poor Persian Jew. The use of ‫و‬ as almost equivalent to *ast* = *est* is noteworthy.

"My help is from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. Every year in London they send money to Iran, to every city they send, but to a little city, Siakal is its name, it is in the district of Reshd. All Israel in Siakal, all are poor, a hundred households, there is no teacher of children, there are no schools, there is one synagogue. They are all poor, and under the rule of Ishmaelites, who are very cruel. There is much oppression (גלות). In London they do not know of the village, Siakal is its name, in the province of Reshd. There are Jews there. For God's sake. The Jews of Siakal are all poor."

Already, Mr. Cazès writes, Jew-baiting is dead in Teheran, and he has every hope of starting other schools in Hamadan and Isfahan, and perhaps even in Shiraz. Our school at Teheran has already had an excellent effect on both children and parents. Nobody hears anything more about persecutions. Big people and small alike show sympathy with our work, and it is the general opinion that in a short time the Israelites will be much more advanced than the Mussulmans.

The Sadr e Aâzem

H. B. M. Minister, Sir Mortimer Durand, introduced me to the Sadr e Aâzem, the all-powerful Chief Minister of the Shah, who made his first entry into his capital during our stay there. We discussed at some length the unsatisfactory position of the Jews. The Sadr e Aâzem protested that the new Shah was even more merciful than the martyred (i. e., assassinated) Shah, his father, and that he himself had always treated the Jews well—so well, indeed, that the Moullahs sometimes found fault with him, and he had given orders—and would repeat them—that the promises of religious toleration held forth by Shah Nasr ed Din when he visited Europe should be carried out to the letter. The Jews, he said, need have no fear that their condition would deteriorate under the new Shah, who was as merciful as he was just. But their position would be much improved if they were better educated.

The Firma Firmân, or Governor of Teheran, whose status as both brother-in-law and son-in-law of the Shah makes him one of the most influential men in Persia (and who, by the by, manifested considerable jealousy of the Sadr e Aâzem), sent for me. While insisting upon the enlightened principles with which all Persians now regard religious nonconformity, he taunted the rich Jews of Europe with their total neglect of their brethren, and said that schools on a European system were urgently needed, and that his Imperial master and public opinion, too, would gladly welcome and even second any efforts in this direction. Since I left Teheran, the Sadr e Aâzem has fallen from

power, and a new ministry has been constituted, of which the Firma Firmân is one of the most important members. General Sir Thomas Gordon, who is a competent authority on the subject, believed that the new ministry is less reactionary than the last, and he urged that a school should be established for the Jews without further delay.

The Jews of Teheran themselves were no less anxious that this should be done, and gave me to understand that they would contribute at least six hundred tomans per annum if such a school could be established under the auspices of the Anglo-Jewish Association or the *Alliance Israélite*. There is a local fund available for that purpose, which produces three hundred tomans per annum—at the present rate of exchange about seventy-five pounds. The Teheran Jewish community has now been established some hundred and fifty years, and is mainly composed of immigrants from Kâshan, Yazd, Isfahan, and Hamadan. Although it numbers barely four thousand souls, there are fourteen little synagogues in the Persian capital, but only a couple of Talmud Torah schools, where nothing is taught but Hebrew, and that of the most elementary description. In the words of the Rabbi, "Nothing of external learning is taught, for there is nobody there who can teach."

מחכמת החיצונים איננו לומדים כלל ועיקר לפי שאין לנו מלמד

Jewish Disabilities

The Teheran Jews are poor, but ignorant. Their chief complaint of persecution is in respect of three points:—

(*a*) They are practically restricted to the ghetto, although Jews may now live in two Fondaks in the bazaar outside the Sûk el Yehudiych.

(*b*) When a Moslem kills a Jew he need pay only thirty-three tomans blood-money. This is the local tariff for manslaughter generally, but as Jews do not kill Moslems they complain that this *Wehrgeld* should not be so low.

(*c*) When a Jew is converted to Islam he succeeds to all the property of his Jewish relatives, to the exclusion of all the next-of-kin who have remained Jews. This seems to depend on custom, not law.

Obviously a benevolent Government could easily dispose of all these grievances, but it is precisely the good-will of the Government which should be cultivated. At present the Jews of Europe are themselves in default, because they have taken no steps in an educational direction. Teheran Jews are in a better position than those who live further from the capital. The influence of the diplomatists of the Powers is not sufficiently felt to keep things even fairly right outside of Teheran.

Notables

The following is a list of some of the more prominent lay members of the Jewish community of Teheran:—

Aga Meir, a silk merchant and a British subject.
Moullah Moûkhtar Cohen Teherani, jeweller.
Moullah Yekutiel (Ismael) Kashani.

Aga David Kashani, merchant.
Chacham Nahurai (Nour Mahmoud), physician.
David Michael Teherani, banker.
Aaron Isfahani, jeweller.
Daoud " Hannah " Goli, broker.
Eliahu Dardashti.
Eli Safon.
Rofe Eliahu of Chumsa.
Aziz Ulla, jeweller.

I have only to add that it was not alone in Teheran that our co-religionists and others pressed upon me their real need and longing for a school. At Reshd and Kazvin the same request was made. The American Mission School is the only institution where anything in the nature of modern educational advantages can be acquired by native Jews, and for obvious reasons it is undesirable that they should be taught there.

ZAKASPIE

A Bird's-eye View of the Transcaspian — Passports — Routes — Krasnovodsk — General Kuropatkin — Diseases — The Railway — Fighting the Sand — Water — Passengers — The Persian Frontier — Geok Tepe — Aschabad — The Ruins of Annau — Merv — The Yadidin — River Oxus — New Bokhara — Bokhara — Jews — Synagogue — Ethnology — Manuscripts and Literature — City Sights — Samarkand — Tamerlane — Russianization — Cotton.

A Bird's-eye View of the Transcaspian

The tourist at Constantinople is told that the modern Turk has become very enlightened, that he is no longer particular even as to the seclusion of his women, and that he has seriously agitated for the abolition of the Yashmak. But the Turkish ladies met in solemn conclave and resolved on the retention of the provoking veil which shades all but their lovely eyes. And why? Because, with true Oriental subtilty, they argue that it is precisely the mystery of the Yashmak which lends them charm, and the Byronic stranger would cease to be Byronic if he discovered that an Eastern beauty stripped of such accessories could not compete with her fair sisters of the West. The jealous zeal with which the Russians seek to hide their Transcaspian possessions from the Western eye seems to be founded on a similarly feminine prejudice. The world is agog with curiosity about the glamours of Tamerlane's historic capital and the famous city which Marco Polo found so *moult grand et noble.* In sober truth, however, Samarkand and Bokhara are two interesting

Oriental cities, and the road there a waste of hideous sand or steppe barely a degree less hideous. Two days and a half it takes to rail over on General Anenkoff's road, and all the time the English Traveller feels a kind of malignant joy that Russia is not really to be envied for her much-vaunted empires of Transcaspia and Turkestan.

And yet there is a good deal on the way which strikes one as beautiful and strange. The railway itself is a stupendous fact. Happy in its environment, it cannot become commonplace. The lands it traverses are still comparatively *terrae incognitae,* and the *impressions de voyage* of a latter-day traveller, to whom Vámbéry had wished God-speed, and who went to Turkestan post-haste and hurried back, may be of a little interest. The special inducement which prompted me to choose the Transcaspian as the place to spend a vacation was the report that Hebrew and Hebræo-Persian MSS. were still to be unearthed at Bokhara. My visit the year before to Teheran by way of the Caspian had been successful and had whetted my appetite. The Foreign Office authorities were good enough to obtain for me the necessary permit. H. B. M. Ambassador at Petersburg applied for it on May 28, 1897, but it was not until August 27 that the Russian Consul in London received instructions by telegram to *viser* my passport. Apparently the sanction was somewhat grudgingly bestowed, but then this was because I am not only an Englishman, but also a Jew. However, the *visa* once inscribed on my passport, I had no further trouble. Indeed, after I had once passed the frontier at Wirballen, it was not demanded until I reached Samarkand. But I was ex-

pected all along the Transcaspian line. At Krasnovodsk, on the Caspian Sea, I was shown a *dossier* in which I could decipher my own name, but, alas, nothing more. At Bokhara, the Russian political agent said he had been duly advised, and so he very kindly provided me with an official Djiguit to show me the sights. At Samarkand also I was *en règle,* and at Aschabad the stationmaster was good enough to give me a *coupé* for myself! Two Italians who were with me for part of the time, and an Englishman whom I met had been informed at Petersburg that they, too, were duly authorized to travel on the Transcaspian, but the authorization does not seem to have been communicated to the officials in Central Asia. Still they were not molested nor interfered with in any way. The officials at Krasnovodsk let them pass with an intimation that they would be liable to be turned back at any point *en route.* As a matter of fact nothing happened, and I fancy that the experience of Mr. Budgett Meakin, who got to Samarkand with his sister, and without a permit—and, after he got there and had seen all he wanted, was told to go home—was only unusual in the sense that the last formality is generally omitted.

Passports

Passport arrangements and Custom House formalities in general were easier this year than I have ever known them before. On my first visit to Russia some friends named Blomfield—a name surely familiar to the Russian diplomatist—were persecuted by the attentions of the police, who followed them about wherever they went, in the altogether erroneous belief that they

were Jews and therefore suspects. A second time—it was during the great cholera epidemic of 1892—I had to avoid Lublin, because it had been notified in the Official Gazette that while all non-Jewish travellers would have to be disinfected and sent on at once, Jewish travellers would be detained in quarantine for a week! In 1896, when I passed through Moscow, the "Slaviansky Bazaar" people could not get back my passport from the police authorities because these had not yet been able to obtain the personal signature of the Governor-General, which was requisite in the case of a Jew. I had to go to the police office myself and explain that as I was a Jew and holy Moscow out of the Pale of Jewish Settlement, they ought to be only too glad to get rid of me that same evening. The joke, or perhaps a threat of complaint to St. Petersburg, brought me the passport within the hour. In 1897, however, I am thankful to say that I observed no signs of Jew-baiting. And generally there seemed a more liberal spirit abroad. There was no bother about books or newspapers. At Paris I had been warned that it was quite hopeless to attempt to bring any books into Russia without special authorization. Well, I had Curzon's "Russia in Central Asia," Dobson's "Russia's Railway Advance," "Bonvallot," and similar books. Curzon I placed at the very top of my kit-bag, but it was passed with an indifference so outspoken a work hardly deserved. Its maps and political criticisms alike failed to offend.

Routes

The quickest, cheapest, and nastiest route to the terminus of the Transcaspian Railway is *via* Berlin,

Warsaw, Moscow, and Rostow to Petrovsk, and thence by steamer direct to Krasnovodsk. I was unfortunate in that I had to increase the length of that journey by passing Petersburg, and, on the sea voyage, calling at Baku. The distance from the Russian frontier to Petrovsk is 3585 versts, and takes five days and a half, but costs only forty-eight roubles first-class and twenty-nine second. The nicest way to Krasnovodsk is *via* Constantinople and Batoum, thence by Transcaucasian railway to Tiflis, then by Troika over the famous Georgian military road across the Caucasus to Vladikawkas, and thence to Petrovsk. The return journey may be varied by taking the steamer from Batoum, Poti, or Novorrosisk, by Kertch, Eupatoria, Yalta, and Sevastopol to Odessa, and home by Lemberg, Cracow, and Vienna. The steamer fare from Petrovsk to Krasnovodsk is twenty-one roubles, and the crossing generally takes thirty hours. Second-class fare from Krasnovodsk to Samarkand, a distance of 1454 versts, is only about twenty roubles. There is no first class yet on the Transcaspian line, and altogether its rolling stock is still lamentably deficient, but they are now building carriages at Aschabad, and by next May, when the extensions to Tashkend and Khokan are expected to be open to traffic, things will probably improve. Even now one must be specially unlucky not to find throughout all the Russias, and even in a second-class carriage, a folding bed for each passenger, and one lavatory and one closet in each carriage. And the carriages are swept and cleaned at intervals throughout the day, so that they are always fairly comfortable.

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BOKHARIOTS

KRASNOVODSK

As the steamer approaches Krasnovodsk, what first catches the eye is the smart little railway station built of gleaming white granite against a background of bare purple mountains—a fitting temple to dedicate to the cult of the iron horse. Hardly less attractive are the other stations on the line, though the background fails as soon as the range of hills which here forms the Russo-Persian frontier is left behind. The next thing to notice is the block of outward as well as inward goods traffic, especially cotton, and this, too, is to be seen all along the line. The breakdown of the Amu Daria Bridge, which during two months necessitated trans-shipment into steamers, must have contributed to the block, but we were told by a high official in the Railway Civil Service that the fault was entirely due to the military mismanagement of the line. Military men were good generals, but bad business men, and had no idea of statistics or engineering. The plans they submitted for a new stone bridge were impossible, dimensions and quantities alike ludicrous, and so for three years the new stone bridge has been talked about but not begun. They could not cope with the traffic, did not provide the necessary facilities for trade and were utterly deficient in initiative.

GENERAL KUROPATKIN

General Kuropatkin is at one and the same time Governor-General of the Transcaspian Province and dictator of the railway. He was Skobeleff's right-hand man, and even the enemies of both admit that he possesses more backbone than that favorite hero. By most Russians he is regarded as the chief military

genius of the day and the hope of the Empire.[1] By a few he is looked upon as being somewhat of a *poseur,* fond of display and inclined to be a theorist. I can bear witness to the splendor of his special train and to the weird and almost awe-inspiring effect of his entry into Samarkand—his landau preceded by four Djiguits, native police outriders, galloping ahead with blazing *flambeaux* waved high above their heads—a sort of living picture out of "The Talisman," or perhaps part of a Lord Mayor's Show in a fog. For the rest he is said to be good-natured with plenty of *bonhomie.* Though he is a great stickler for Panslavism, and professes a rigid intention to admit only Russians *pur sang* into his Emperor's new territories, the climate has been too much for him and his fellow-countrymen. All sorts of inducements are offered to Russians to settle, but with comparatively little success. Armenians and Jews, though native-born Russian subjects, are regarded as aliens and not encouraged. But they are acclimatized, and so at the present time much of the trade of Samarkand and Bokhara is in their hands. Russian civil servants fight shy of the three years' service for which they have now to covenant, and, notwithstanding their high pay and other privileges, return, or rather escape, to cold Russia as opportunity offers. Nor is this surprising when one thinks that 101° F. is a common temperature during half the year and 160° F. in the shade not unknown, that it is impossible to dwell except in cities, that these are twelve hours distant by rail one

[1] He is now commander-in-chief of the Russian armies fighting against Japan.

from the other, with a howling wilderness between, and that each of them is notorious for a special complaint, to which the new-comer is more liable than the native.

Diseases

The endemic disease at Khokan is Zob, or goitre; at Samarkand, Prokaza, or lupus; at Bokhara, Rishta, or inguinal worm; at Merv, typhoidal malaria; and at Aschabad, Pendinka, or eczema. Influenza, we were told, had been deadly throughout Turkestan, and it is the disease of which natives and visitors alike are now most afraid. Lepers, not all loathsome in appearance, but all doomed to living death, are to be seen outside all the great towns, squatting along the roadside, on the way, significantly enough, to the burial grounds and tombs of the saints, so as to beg from the pious and gain the pittance on which they live.

Throughout Central Asia fever is prevalent. In the army, indeed, every ache, from toothache to rheumatism, is ascribed to fever and dosed with quinine. Even in Old Bokhara the cult of that magic drug is so far advanced that the local chemist supplies it in convenient little gelatine cylinders, which have been so recently invented as not yet to be known in the London market. And, by the by, it is a significant fact that in every Russian town it is the apothecary's Apteka which is the finest and largest shop, and apparently does the biggest trade.

The Railway

Krasnovodsk, as the terminus of the Transcaspian line, is only three years old. It has recently replaced

Uzun Ada, which was about a hundred versts nearer Samarkand, but which labored under the disadvantage of being a bad harbor with little water and inaccessible during some of the prevailing winds.

The junction of the old line and the new one is at Dschebel station. The new line hugs the sea-coast for a few miles, and then gradually recedes and runs parallel to the escarpment of the last outspur of the mountains, which constitute the Russo-Persian frontier. The line itself is pretty nearly level, gradients are excessively light, and tunnels there are none all the way. There are numerous bridges, but to a layman only three seemed important—those over the Murghab, the Oxus, and over the Zarafshan near Samarkand. The Persian mountains continue right along to the Amu Daria, and are a welcome relief to the monotonous level on the other side of the line. There is plenty of water at Krasnovodsk, and the Russians are so pleased with the place that they propose to make another great railway from there to Khiva, a distance of about three hundred miles. But the heat and dust are simply awful, and give a fitting foretaste of what one has to expect in Central Asia. The one compensation is that a refreshing sea bath can be taken there for five kopecks. Armenians use the sea for washing purposes, and we were somewhat perplexed when we saw one jump into the water, break two eggs on his head, and wash his hair with the yolks.

Between Krasnovodsk and Aschabad the stations are hardly more than halting places to enable meeting trains to pass each other, the Transcaspian Railway being of course a single track throughout. The buffets are rarely provided with more than two or three eggs

and onions, and the indispensable Vodka. There were a couple of botanists in the train on our return journey, and they lost no opportunity of getting out and collecting specimens in the steppe and dunes, finding different species of the same plants at each successive station.

Fighting the Sand

But even the unscientific traveller, innocent of botany, cannot fail to be struck by the effective process adopted for checking the encroachment on the line of sand avalanches by means of saxaoul plantations, which for hundreds of versts run parallel with the iron track. Sand is the snow of the steppe, and a more insidious enemy to the civil engineer. The desert is nowhere perfectly flat; it is undulated by waves, the crest of which is often twenty feet higher than the base, and as the prevailing wind seems to be N. E., the S. W. side of the wave falls away precipitously, and while the surface of the summit is comparatively firm for walking, it is dangerous to walk too near the edge. One fact, however, struck us very much. General Anenkoff and the projectors of the line took precautions, far-sighted and reasonably calculated to be effective, but his successors, the men now in charge, do not trouble about giving his measures a fair chance. At station after station, wherever we found herbage and plants, there we found also spoor of camel and buffalo and goat. No care is taken to preserve the shrubs so anxiously reared; in many places the surface has been nibbled bare. And yet it would be quite easy to fence off a few feet either side of the line, and leave the herds and flocks of the Tekkes to be content with a

scantier area of pasturage. Before the advent of the Russians, they had nothing at all in many places.

Another consideration that occurred to us was as to the possibility of replacing the saxaouls in process of time by fir-trees and thus re-afforesting the country. This has been found practicable in many of the waste places and sand-dunes of Europe, and it ought not to be difficult in Asia. We were told that an experiment of the kind had not proved quite successful on the banks of the Volga, but there is evidently nobody in office whose business it is to look after forestry in Turkestan, and the consequence is that even in Samarkand, the City of Trees, where in one stately boulevard there is an avenue composed of twelve lines of giant trees, wood is terribly expensive, and has to be imported from the interior of Russia.

Water

To persons not scientific the stations were interesting for the glimpses they gave of the tall but deliberate Turcoman on his native steppe, trading for a huge Arbuza water-melon, or the more luscious D'ynja. This is the melon properly so-called, but the Russian avoids it as fever-giving, perhaps because it requires water to feed it, and for drinking purposes all water in Central Asia is dangerous as well as rare.

The railway trains must carry their own water; a huge cask is attached to each engine by way of tender. The kitchen-car next the "buffet" is roofed by a cistern of water, the supply of which is constantly renewed at the stations by filtered drinking-water, hauled up by the attendants pail by pail. At each station also there is a cask of such water, to which the

native passengers rush as soon as the train arrives, and from which the Russian ladies, who make their own "chi" on board, fill their teapots.

Passengers

On the up-journey we found the train inconveniently crowded. All the second-class tickets available were soon sold out, and many a respectable merchant of Turkestan, in flowing robes and picturesque turban, had to content himself with the bare boards of third-class. But third-class carriages, although the fare is uniform, are subdivided into three varieties. First come the luggage-trucks for native sarts, laborers, and shepherds, into and out of which they scramble as best they can, and where of their own modest bundles they make seats or beds.

Of the remaining third-class passengers, the Persians, Jews, and Armenians, and the Sunnite merchants mostly keep together, and the third variety consists of the inferior Russian employees and soldiers and servants. Russians excepted, the train was monopolized by traders homeward bound from the great annual fair at Nijni Novgorod. Many of these were pious traders and had extended their commercial travel into a religious pilgrimage further west—the Mohammedans to Mecca and the Jews to Jerusalem. The Jews were full of the Zionist Congress at Basle, and in all innocence asked me whether the Messiah was at hand, and Queen Victoria had given Palestine to the Jews!

So many of those returning traders and pilgrims were there that the only three tourists in the train were crowded out of second-class into third, and glad

enough to find in a third-class carriage room to lie down for the night. Even the table in the "buffet-wagon" was used as a bed by one or two weary travellers. If such were an ordinary instance of passenger traffic on the line, it would be easy to credit the Russian boast that the Transcaspian Railway pays the Government nearly three per cent. on the original outlay.

During my short visit, however, I used the train five times, and only once was it so inconveniently crowded. Now, there are only three passenger trains a week each way, and so one cannot help thinking that there must be something wrong with the statistics. But Russia is rich enough to abstain from counting the cost where reasons military or political call for action. And so there is little doubt that the projected line from Khiva to Krasnovodsk and the stupendous Mongolian line will be constructed very soon, although the one may not, and the other cannot, ever pay expenses.

The average distance between stations is rather less than fifteen miles, and the time it takes to traverse it about one hour. A time-table of the trains which go to and from Samarkand three times a week would serve to show that many of the stations are only halting places named after the engineers of the line or other men whom the Russian Chauvinist delighteth to honor.

The Persian Frontier

The Persian mountains near Ushak present the characteristic appearance of a great wall rising suddenly and sharply from the dead flat. They are most precipitous and treeless, with dry torrent beds to indi-

cate where the rainfall goes in the rainy season. Though it was a hundred degrees in the shade, we noticed "Oblaka," feathery clouds, radiating from the mountains and indicating wintry weather in the Persian highlands. One cannot help thinking that, from the military point of view, the line would be all the safer if it were not so near a mountain frontier; but then the Russians have nowhere shown that they are very frightened of their Persian neighbors, and we English are not thought likely ever to advance so far north in Persia as to be of much use to its rulers in frontier fighting.

At Bami, about sixteen hours' distance from Krasnovodsk, one first begins to come across the native Turcoman at home. Tekke Turcomans mostly appeal to one for their size. They are all tall, and their huge woolly caps add to their height. Like most giants, they seem good-humored enough, and it was funny to see the little Russian soldiers ordering them about without fear or compunction. Their wives and daughters are brightly dressed, comely, and unveiled, and bedecked with quaint silver trinkets.

Geok Tepe

About a hundred versts further east we come to Geok Tepe, famous in the military annals of the century. It was the last obstacle to the Russian conquest of Turkestan, and the name of Skobeleff the Destroyer will ever be associated with its capture. In our train travelled one of Skobeleff's most trusted henchmen, the Captain Sijmen, who was in command of the naval brigade which so materially helped the Russian advance. Like all Finlanders, the gallant captain spoke English,

and waxed enthusiastic over the prowess of Skobeleff and Kuropatkin. He went over the battle for our benefit, correcting Curzon's account here and there, but expressing amazement at his general accuracy. With us he climbed the breach once more, but, though he got up all right, the *descensus Averni* was not so easy. He slipped and fell, and but for the friendly assistance of a couple of jolly "Selniks," the train might have left him on the very field where six years ago a Turcoman bullet had laid him low and deprived him of the *kudos* of leading the final charge. Trees are now planted round the station which bears the famous name of Geok Tepe, and blood-red oleander blooms, fitting type of the massacre with which the battle ended. But within the walls of circumvallation are ruins only and dank grass, and the modern Turcoman leads his camels gingerly over the broken but still steep ruined walls, and takes them to pasture where but yesterday the last heroes of his race fought and died.

Aschabad

Aschabad, on the edge of the Kara-Kum, or "black sand" of the oasis, is the first town of importance on the line. It is twenty-two hours from the sea by railway, and a favorite starting-point for caravans to Meshed in Persia on the south and to Khiva on the west. The present town, with its long and shady avenues of trees, its large and ugly public buildings, and dreary market squares, is modern and Russian to the core. The Tekke men take care to enter it as rarely as may be, and their women seem to keep out of it altogether. There are plenty of Persians to be seen,

but always *sans famille*. What are called its bazaars are but wide streets with two or three insignificant shops, but they say that Tekke carpets can be bought there better than anywhere else. The only object of interest is the new Greek Church with its three cupolas of sparkling gold, and in front a monument in memory of Skobeleff, with a business-like but ornamental cannon at each corner, ready, it would seem, as that hot-headed hero always was, to get into action at the first call. Here I spent the Day of Atonement, and, among our small congregation, were one or two Yadidin, of whom more anon.

Aschabad itself may be uninteresting, but there are ruins within ten miles which are quite worth going to see. A fairly good carriage track runs parallel to the railway line past some prosperous looking native villages to Annau. But at one spot the softness of the sand makes it almost impossible for horses to drag a carriage through. It is a sign of the end of the oasis.

The Ruins of Annau

A little further on appear the ruins of a whole town dominated by a majestic mosque. Local tradition assigns its destruction to Tamerlane the Destroyer. And evidently it is only since his day that the desert has encroached on the oasis and swallowed up the ancient site. Russian progress may once again carry the war into the enemy's camp and reclaim the site, and already there are signs of Annau becoming again inhabited.

The ruins of Annau are themselves highly interesting. We have the houses of the Tekke natives—each a sort of Martello Tower—easily defended against any number of freebooters that might swoop down upon it

from the adjacent mountains. In Turkestan, at least, every man's house used to be his castle, and though its windows are few, its door inaccessible, and its comforts modest, there is something imposing even in its repellent exterior. But the town is dominated and overshadowed by the really magnificent mosque which stands upon a sort of acropolis. The mosaics and painted tiles are still in a fair state of preservation. They are in all colors and really lustrous; those in Samarkand are quite dull in comparison. What most interested us about the mosque, however, was a large quantity of horns and skulls of *ovis poli,* or mufflon, heaped up in a corner of an inner chamber of the sanctuary, the relics of sacrifices of half a millennium ago, and a long, and really formidable looking serpent which we startled as it lay basking on the top of some *débris.* Luckily the reptile was not less frightened than we were, and vanished before we could do battle with it. It was the only wild animal I encountered during my visit to Central Asia. I heard a few jackals barking at night, and was told that tigers occasionally swam across the Oxus, a mile or two above the bridge, but I really saw nothing else which was wild except a countless number of lively little lizards scintillating in the sand, and one exhausted eagle which was caught on the deck of the good ship "Bariatinsky," half-way across the Caspian. About fifty versts beyond Annau, we came to more ruins at Bada Dur. These now rise up out of the sand, but obviously in times past they must have been outside the desert, and perhaps not even on its verge—another proof of the encroachment of the sand.

Fifty versts further we came to Dushak, interesting

for its black-fezzed Persians waiting at the station. This is the point on the line nearest to the Persian frontier, which is here only seven versts distant.

Merv

Merv, the Queen of Asia, as it once was called, is six hours' distance by rail. It is another instance of how the mighty are fallen, instances of which are so frequent in Central Asia. There are dust heaps a mile or two from the dull and dreary town, and they are evidence of ruins of some extent. But the importance of Merv must always have lain in its geographical position rather than its actual wealth and population. And yet Merv is mentioned in the Zend Avesta, and Alexander the Great helped to build it. A Nestorian Archbishop was enthroned there sixteen centuries ago, and there, in the eighth century, the veiled prophet of Khorasan started a new religion. Parthians, Arabs, Mongols, Persians, Bokhariots, Turcomans, and Russians have all held it in turn.

Its river is the Murghab, which boasts of one of the few really important railway bridges of the Transcaspian. Situate not much higher up on this same river is Penjdeh, which in March, 1885, was on the point of causing an Anglo-Russian war. I met an officer who had been on General Komaroff's staff at the time, and he told me some mysterious story as to how Captain Yate had suddenly departed without his luggage. My information was too scanty to enable me to appreciate it as I should have done, but it was obvious that what the British public has heard about the incident is by no means all there is to learn on the subject.

Merv commanded the great roads from Khiva to

Herat, and Bokhara to Meshed, and is thus at the cross-ways of the caravan routes to Persia, Afghanistan and India, China and Turkestan. And it was only in 1883 that its capture by the Russians was deplored by us as the loss of a mighty bulwark to India's defence. I am no politician or military tactician, nor in any way competent to express an opinion, but although there are numbers of Russian soldiers to be seen there, it certainly does not look important to-day.

The Yadidin

I was interested in Merv because I found it the home of a couple of thousand Marranos, but Marranos of the nineteenth century. Some eighty years ago, under the cruel reign of Shah Noureddin's father, the Jews of Meshed were persecuted beyond the point of endurance. They were given Mahomet's choice of Islam or the sword. They chose Islam, but though they have since outwardly conformed, and are known as Yadidin, they have never abandoned Jewish observances. Only they practice their crypto-Judaism in stealth and in terror for their lives. If they go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, they pass Jerusalem by the way, and the wailing wall is to them still more sacred than the black stone of the Kibla. There are said to be two thousand such Yadidin at Meshed, fifty or sixty families at Merv, a few at Aschabad, and several at Bokhara and Samarkand. At Samarkand I had the privilege of becoming godfather to the son of such a Yadida, who keeps every Jewish custom scrupulously, and is bitterly ashamed of his and his father's temporary bowing in the Temple of Rimmon. The Russians, whose frontier policy has always been somewhat Machiavellian, are said to en-

courage the settlement of such Yadidin as well as the Babis, or Shiite Protestants, within their borders, as tending to Russianize the adjoining territories.

River Oxus

A couple of hundred versts beyond Merv, we come to the far-famed Amu Daria, the Oxus of the classics, but dear to all Islam as the Gihon, or Jihoun, of Scripture. On our way out we were fortunate enough to find that the long but frail wooden bridge had broken down, and that there was solution of continuity where the current was most rapid. And so we had to cross the Oxus on a little steamboat which had been brought there by rail in eight parts a few months before. We saw other steamers lying off Chardjuy, which is a quaint and quite important little town on the banks of the great river. One of these steamers had just brought some hundreds of time-expired soldiers from Kharki, the chief Russian garrison on the Afghan frontier. I was told that there are never less than three thousand Russian soldiers under arms at Kharki, ready for any emergency, and to judge by the numbers of ex-soldiers we saw, this number is probably under the mark. A Russian soldier's length of service varies according to the station of his regiment, from two years and eight months in Europe to six years and eight months in the Amoor Province, east of China, where Russian troops are concentrating more and more. At Kharki they serve as Turkestan soldiers for four years and eight months. The disembarkation was effected in such rollicking high spirits as spoke volumes both for the monotony of Kharki and the *bonhomie* of the Russian soldier, which nearly five years of iron drill

had been unable to quell. Some of these soldiers were on their way back to their homes on the German frontier, near Lodz, and all were delighted at the prospect of the fatted calf that was in preparation for them. They were merry souls, and vowed that the Czar gives his men enough to eat, and with a light heart talked of the coming war with the "Anglichanka," or English Lady, as Queen Victoria was called. Our trans-shipment from train to steamer was very picturesque, and lent itself to the camera. Turcoman porters, half-naked and quite regardless of the tropical sun, carried the most nondescript kinds of burdens down the inclined plane which had been improvised to lead from the railroad to the meadow of lofty bulrushes which hid the river banks. The contents of our train would have astonished the most phlegmatic Yankee traveller feather-beds and mattresses and pillows of every hue melons as large as pumpkins, and grapes in bunches which recalled those of the Jewish spies in the wilderness; guns more ornamental than effective, and umbrellas of all sorts; modern Gladstone bags and saddle-bags, or "Marfrush," that might have carried the possessions of the Patriarchs thousands of years ago.

A train was waiting on the other side, but the crossing was difficult, calling for delicate navigation, and took four hours. The main stream of the Oxus is only six hundred and fifty yards wide, but the bridge is placed at a wider part, where there are islands to buttress it. The main channel is twenty-five to twenty-nine feet deep, and the rapidity of the current reminds one of the Rhone at Lyons. It must run at least six miles an hour. In ordinary circumstances the train takes pretty nearly half-an-hour to cross the

bridge from end to end. An ordinary engine is too heavy to be trusted upon it, and so a tiny engine-tender on four wheels takes its place, and looks more like a model than a work-a-day locomotive.

East of the Amu Daria the oasis soon loses itself in sand once more. Whether it is that the banks are too steep to admit of extensive inundation, or that the soil is too thirsty, or the sand too persistent, the "other side of the river," as the natives call it, is disappointingly arid. One was almost forced to perpetrate the pun that the great river was, after all, but "a mud area." "Loess" is as rich and fertile as Nile mud, and yields eightyfold. Only there is not enough of it, for the desert soon swallows up its curious melon gardens, and a hundred versts intervene between the river and the great oasis of Bokhara.

New Bokhara

As the train approached Bokhara Station, the natives showed obvious marks of excitement, and the scene at the railway station was quite touching to witness. The phlegmatic Oriental of fable is not to be seen in Turkestan. On the contrary, the native seems all nerves and emotions. Pilgrims were welcomed by the stay-at-homes with kisses and embraces, and even a mere acquaintance stroked his beard, if he had one, or his face, if he had not, in token of satisfaction and welcome. Bokhara station is about ten miles distant from the capital. It is surrounded by "Novoe Bokhara," a new Persian town, intensely dull and supremely uninteresting, where reside all the Europeans whom business or office requires to live near the famous old city. There are two hotels of one story

and scant accommodation, and the large and important-looking Embassy, where the amiable political agent, M. Ignatieff, resides. The road to Old Bokhara is not devoid of interest. Cotton plantations, a picturesque village or two, and many trees relieve the monotony of the way, and a continuous stream of natives on horseback, camel-back, and donkey-back, narrow carts with colossal wheels, and worn-out Droshkys raise the dust and prevent one from feeling lonely. Nearer Bokhara one passes rose and pomegranate gardens, the Gulistans of Persian poetry, but, alas, they are surrounded by high walls, and the gate-keepers are either dense or not venal.

Bokhara

Bokhara itself is a wonderful old city. Surrounded by a picturesque old wall of the time of the Crusaders, with castellated gates and towers, it has no room to expand. There are burial-grounds within the walls, which still further restrict the space available for building. But, happily, Russian advice, which is here equivalent to a command, precludes the Bokhariots from any longer burying their dead near the houses of the living. Their streets are narrow and not straight, and on either side rise the high walls of truly Oriental houses, with windows giving only on internal courts. At sundown the gates are shut and the streets deserted. The rash traveller who has delayed his return to town till night has to rouse the watchman and persuade him to open the city gate. And, *experto crede,* it is both uncomfortable and uncanny to grope one's way home through dark and empty lanes with all the curs of Bokhara barking at one's heels. Near the

centre of the bazaar one or two watchmen, with lantern and rattles, make night hideous by their cries, and scare the ghosts. But I have walked nearly two miles in Bokhara, within the walls, without seeing a single soul, and that a good two hours before midnight.

There are two or three caravanserais in the old town, but no place where for payment a European can lodge with any comfort. I was fortunate enough to be put up at the Moscow Bank, the only building furnished in anything like European style. But, of course, the absence of all signs of Western civilization makes Bokhara all the more interesting. A week is not too long a time to spend there.

JEWS

Most of that time I spent with my co-religionists, of whom four or five thousand reside there, inhabiting a special quarter, and wearing a special badge on their clothing. Their Rabbi is Mollah Hezekiah ha-Kohen, whose father had been Rabbi before him. Perhaps I was prejudiced in their favor, but they certainly struck me as most intelligent and hospitable. Many of them were great travellers. One man had been to China; several had visited India by way of Afghanistan and the Khyber Pass. At least a couple of hundred were Hadjis who had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and there are at the present moment at least that number of Bokhariots settled in Jerusalem with the pious purpose of living and dying there. Most of the travelled Jews of Bokhara have been to Moscow, many to Paris, and some to London. One good man had been five times to Moscow. His first journey was by caravan, by way of Astrakhan and the Volga,

and it took him eighty days and cost him five hundred roubles. But that was nearly forty years ago. None of the Bokhariot Jews are *rich*, but most of them seem to earn a livelihood. Some are cotton growers, and some grow grapes, and some cultivate tobacco; many are merchants trading to Moscow, and exchanging carpets for manufactured goods, and importing India tea, from Bombay, *via* Batoum and Baku.

Their standard of culture is much higher than might be expected. Half of them could speak Hebrew, and in synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, I heard an itinerant Rabbi from Safed preach evolution in a Hebrew sermon. His theme was the Rabbinical dictum that "Repentance, Prayer, and Charity avert the evil decree." But how, he asked, can the world's course be changed? And he answered, that gradually and by degrees we can divert the mightiest river, and persuade Nature to change her countenance.

Synagogue

The chief synagogue is some five or six hundred years old, with additions of more modern date, constituting something like chapels in a cathedral, divine service being held separately in each. Of course, it has a Genizah, or hidden chamber, in the roof, for the preservation of disused sacred writings. Among the papers there, I found, carefully folded up, no less an antique than a placard printed in Bengali and English, and announcing a conjuring performance which was to have taken place at Calcutta in 1866, under the auspices of one Professor Vanek, "Grand Wizard of the North"!

Most of the Jewish householders had books, gener-

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SYNAGOGUE AT BOKHARA

ally in Hebrew, or Persian in Hebrew characters. But they were richer in early prints than in manuscripts. There were several *incunabula,* and amongst them the Ixar Pentateuch printed in Spain in 1490, two years before the expulsion of the Spanish Jews. The copy is important, because of its marginal notes and corrections, which show that it had been collated at Cairo with the famous Ben Asher Codex, written there in 897, exactly one thousand years ago, and the oldest dated Hebrew Bible MS. in the world. There were also some pages of the Catalonian prayer book, printed in 1526 in Salonica for the Jewish exiles from Barcelona, and many Constantinopolitan prints, which are either unique or very rare. *Habent sua fata libelli* may be fitly applied to the wandering Jewish books.

Ethnology

There are perhaps twenty thousand Jews in the Khanate, most of whom live in the towns. Jews have for centuries been resident in both country and capital. Like their neighbors, the Afghans, the Bokhariots in general, and especially the Turcomans, are by many believed to be descended from the Ten Tribes; but the Jews of Bokhara are Talmud Jews, and are probably descended from the Babylonian Jews who migrated eastward after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans. Their family names prove that many came from Persia *via* Merv and some from Khiva.

The Chinese Jews of Kai-Fong-Foo are probably originally from Bokhara, the Persian rubrics in their liturgies being in the Bokharian dialect. The Bokhara Jews themselves have a tradition that their ancestors settled in various parts of Persia and especially at

Sabzawar, two days' journey from Meshed; that they were removed thence under the conqueror Genghis Khan (1220) to Balkh and Samarkand; and that when Samarkand fell into ruin, under Babi Mehemet Khan, the conqueror of Shah Abbas (1598), they went to Bokhara, where there was a Jewish colony; and some of them emigrated thence to Tsheen Patsheen (China), but soon ceased to have communication with their mother-country, though they "carried their genealogies with them."

The missionary Wolff visited Bokhara, in 1832, when Mollah Pinchas, the elder, was chief Rabbi, and there were four synagogues in the city. Wolff estimated the number of Jews at ten thousand, and he states that they paid only three hundred dollars per annum by way of tax to Bahadur Khan. He also states that there were three hundred Jewish families, converts to Mohammedanism, who were scorned by the general population, and who intermarried with the Gholoom or slaves of Persia and not with the Uzbegs.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century one Joseph ben Moses Maimon, a native of Tetuan, and therefore called "Mughrebi," came to Bokhara *via* Jerusalem and Bagdad. He found the Jews ignorant and unobservant, and revolutionized their ritual and practice, sending to Europe for Hebrew books. The Jews have now forgotten their old Persian liturgy and have adopted that of the Sephardim of Italy, in the belief that they are descended, as Maimon was, from the Spanish refugees of 1492. Rabbi Joseph Maimon had an unsuccessful rival in a learned Yemenite Jew, Rabbi Zachariah ben Mazliach.

Manuscripts and Literature

Here and in the neighborhood, I acquired about seventy Hebrew and Hebrew-Persian manuscripts, one of which was written in Herat, many of them being transliterations into Hebrew of the great Persian poets, such as Sadi, Jami, and Nizami, and lesser local celebrities, like Tufili, Zeribu of Samarkand, and Musahfiki.

In 1490 there flourished Uzziel Moses ben David, who wrote poems in Hebrew and Persian. Other Jewish poets were Yusuf Yehudi ben Isaac (1688-1755), mentioned above, and his friends Uzbek, Elisha, and Solomon Mollah. Somewhat later were David ben Abraham ben מחני, Uzziel, Benjamin Siman-Tob, and Eleazar ha-Kohen, and, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ibrahim ibn Abu al-Khair, author of the "Khadaidad" (ed. Salemann, St. Petersburg, 1897).

City Sights

The show places of Bokhara—its horrible prison, its lofty isolated minaret, from the top of which captives were hurled by way of punishment, its Medresses (colleges) and mosques, its busy *registan,* or market place, gleaming with melons and many-colored silks, its sleepy tanks embowered in trees, its camels, veiled women, and Hadjis, its sleek Persian cats, its quaint potteries and oil mills—all these have been often and eloquently described. But Bokhara will ever abide in my memory for its kaleidoscopic multitude of human pictures. Every type of the Orient is here represented, with not a single inharmonious Western

face to break the spell. The crafty Afghan, the proud Pathan, the big Turcoman, the plausible Hindoo, the dapper Persian, and the heathen Chinee—these are but a few of the characters that walk in that old-world city.

SAMARKAND

Samarkand as a city of ruins is much more imposing than Bokhara, and for the ordinary globe-trotter perfectly entrancing. Everything is associated with the name of its great citizen, Tamerlane, and even the tomb of Daniel the prophet is brought into relation with that mighty monarch. The sarcophagus is over twenty yards long, as beseems a prophet's stature. It has been recently covered by a brick chapel with three cupolas, but photographs of the ancient structure can be had in Samarkand. It is grandly placed at the edge of a cliff overhanging the rapid river Seop. Tradition has it that Tamerlane had seen a tomb at Susa, in Persia, with a warning inscribed thereon that none should open its door. And so he broke it open from behind, and found it written that Nebi Daniel was there buried, and the impetuous conqueror had the sarcophagus removed with all reverence, and carried it with him to his own capital to be its palladium.

The local Jews do not believe the story nor do they quite disbelieve it, for I went with two who prayed there as at the grave of the righteous. Some of them think that Samarkand is the new Samaria founded by the Ten Tribes what time Israel was taken captive by Shalmaneser, King of Assyria.

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HIGH STREET IN OLD SAMARKAND

(GHETTO TO THE LEFT)

TAMERLANE

But Tamerlane's tomb is not apocryphal, and it is really one of the most impressive of the world's show-places. The entrance to the building is, of course, ornamented with a marvellous display of the floral and geometric turquoise and green and other tiles for which the city is so famous. They are not lustrous but rather dead in color and yet not the less beautiful. The interior is a small chapel with some half-dozen coffins—Tamerlane's is of black stone, and his son's, his mother's, and his teacher's are of the whitest marble, with two plumed standards at the head of the Ulema. In the vault below are the actual marble caskets in which the bodies were enshrined. Tamerlane's is closely engraved with Arabic characters. The surrounding border announces all his titles, "Ameer Timur," etc., and the body of the inscription gives his pedigree up to Adam, the whole altogether more legible than credible.

Of Ulug Beg, the astronomer, and Baba Khaneem, the foreign queen, and all the other *cinquo cento* worthies, there are numerous memorials still extant. Most of them, however, have suffered seriously from the effects of the earthquake on Friday, September 24. Cracks have widened, many tiles have tumbled down, and walls have fallen or threaten to fall. The crooked minarets of the great Medres have become more crooked still, and even modern buildings have been much damaged. There were two distinct shocks at eight and eleven in the evening, and nothing like it has been known for a generation. The inhabitants were terror-stricken. But earthquakes are by no means

uncommon nor are violent weather changes infrequent, so that it would be a boon to science if Russia would establish seismological observatories throughout its Asiatic possessions, with a view to the registration of such phenomena.

Russianization

Apart from its ruins Samarkand is not particularly fascinating. It has been Russian for several years, and the contrast between the native and the modern quarter tends to grow less and less striking. The Sart Bazaar has been made accessible for carriages by an autocratic road which has broken right through the ancient town and divided it in twain. The *tout ensemble* therefore is not so picturesque as Bokhara's, but it has many beautiful corners and archways, and clumps of ancient trees. It is not a walled city, and all the houses seem to have been able to expand freely, so that flowers and trees grace every courtyard. It lies a thousand feet higher than Bokhara, with a greater rain-fall, and occasional snow.

Samarkand boasts a museum, which contains a number of rare Bactrian and Persian coins, as well as specimens from the coal mines in the Bokhara Hills, and the alluvial gold found in the neighborhood. Preparation is also being made for the *bonâ fide* traveller, for posted up outside the more notable ruins are notices in four languages warning the tourist under heavy penalties not to deface nor remove any antiques. These languages of travel are Russian, Persian, French, and English. This zeal for the protection of monuments is a new and welcome feature in the Russian character.

Here, as elsewhere, the Russians have distinguished themselves by their intelligent plantations. The "Avrahamovsky Boulevar" is a magnificent avenue of twelve rows of poplars, and a worthy monument of Samarkand's first governor. The last, Count Rostoffzoff, has just died and is bitterly lamented. He was remarkable for his English sympathies, and, indeed, resided in London for some years in honorable exile, by way of punishment for the indiscretion of paying a visit, at Biarritz, to the great Russian socialist, A. E. Herzen. It is significant of Russian progress that Alexander II. pardoned and promoted him, and that Nicholas II. allows Smirnof's "Life and Work of Herzen at Home and Abroad" to be published in St. Petersburg and become the favorite book of 1897.

The glory of New Samarkand seems on the wane. It is no longer the terminus of the Transcaspian Railway, for this has now been extended as far as Tashkend, the capital of Turkestan and seat of Baron Vrevsky's government. The new line is to be opened in May, and is only an installment of Russian railway activity. It is expected to join the great Manchurian main line somewhere in the neighborhood of Lake Balkhash. Russian officials at home and abroad are furnished with a very interesting railway map of Asia, showing the lines constructed or in progress of construction or projected in Siberia, China, and India. The map makes one thoughtful. But if a flying visit to Turkestan justifies the expression of an opinion, one would be inclined to say that the great eastward stream of Russian expansion has been diverted by the Himalayas, and is flowing steadily but irresistibly, not to India,

but to China. And in Asia there is room for two great empires, and England and Russia have no longer any cause for quarrel.

Cotton

Commercially, the Transcaspian Railway has already worked wonders. A great trade in cotton has been created by it. In Samarkand, as in Bokhara, cotton is gradually ousting the grape from its area of cultivation, although for centuries the grape has been the Turcoman boast. Even now, it is no rare thing for a local magnate to have at one and the same banquet six or eight kinds of grapes on his table, or rather on his carpet, for there are no tables. Of these, the long Cabul grape, shaped like a kidney, seems the strangest.

Three million poods of cotton were exported in 1896. Two million came from Khokan, including Samarkand, and five hundred thousand from Bokhara. Half a million poods were bought by Poznanski, a great Jewish manufacturer, who employs seven thousand hands in his cotton mills at Lodz in Poland. I was told that the greater part of the trade was in the hands of our co-religionists, and that, though the Transcaspian was outside the Pale of Jewish Settlement, and *de jure* tabooed to the Jew, the Government welcomed them *de facto* as bringing money, business, and prosperity to their new possessions. Technically, the Panslavist would rather have Turkestan and Siberia peopled by Slavs. The Jews, though they be Russian, are not Slavs, and are therefore outside the sympathies of the *soi-disant* Russian patriot. But he has learnt by the experience of at least one generation that the Slavonic race is difficult to acclimatize in the burning

sands of Turkestan or the icy plains of Siberia. So he finds himself compelled to welcome the more adaptable Hebrew.

And herein, I venture to assert, lies the true solution of the Russo-Jewish question. No millionaire, no cohort of millionaires, no government, however strong, can tempt or command a population of millions to cross the seas. Only in Russia itself can the question be solved. And Russia is great enough to suffice for all its inhabitants, even for its Jews. The resources of Siberia and Central Asia are gigantic beyond the dreams of avarice. The world is only now beginning to wake to them. It is a matter of history that Jews helped to develop the trade of America, of India, of Australia, of Africa. Let Russia open the gates of the Pale, and she will find that her Jewish children will be of the makers of her Eastern Empire. And the stone which the builders had refused will become the headstone of the corner.

A VISIT TO MOISESVILLE

Township, Village, and Farm—The Pampa—Prospects—Russians and Roumanians Compared—Jews in Argentine.

TOWNSHIP, VILLAGE, AND FARM

A JOURNEY across South America by way of the Andes gives one the opportunity of visiting Moisesville *via* Rosario before touching Buenos Ayres. The latest report of the Jewish Colonization Association (Paris: Veneziani, 1902) gives some particulars about the Hirsch Colonies in Argentine, though it neither mentions the staff or even the Director, nor gives the slightest hint as to their locality or nearest railway stations. But Moisesville is a station on the narrow-gauge line of the *Compagnie Française des chemins de fer de Santa Fé*, and by reference to a time-table I was able to reach it, mosquito-bitten and perspiring, one blazing Sunday in December, 1902. The route I chose was not the best; the proper station would have been Palacios, on the Buenos Ayres and Rosario (English) line, about eighteen hours' distance from Buenos Ayres, but arrival by the one line and departure by the other give one the opportunity of traversing several extra miles of the estate.

The Colony has already seven railway stations upon it, and comprises fifty square leagues, each of twenty-five square kilometres, an area larger than many an English county, with a scattered population, of which two thousand are Jews and rather more than two hundred colonist farmers. These farmers are located in

one of three methods: (*a*) in Moisesville Township; (*b*) in small village groups, each of four farms; and (*c*) isolated along lines. The first system is the oldest and worst; the last, or lineal system, is considered the best, but the second appeals alike to the clannishness of the Jew, four prolific families easily supplying Minyan, while the practical sense of the agriculturist enables him to live on his land. Four farms are grouped together, intersected by a road, with the dwelling-houses at the adjoining corners of the four farms, with Quintas, or gardens, as boundary.

Moisesville proper is rather less than a quarter of the whole Colony in extent; it is situated in the S. E., while to the N. E. lies Vavelberg, to the N. W. Monocotes and Leven, and to the S. W. Zadoc Kahn. North of Vavelberg is a tract of land, marked Jewish Colonization Association on the plan, some of which is virgin forest and which remains as yet unallotted. Palacios lies between Zadoc Kahn and Moisesville, and is an early Argentine Colony, named after its owner, and not all of it has yet been acquired by the Jewish Colonization Association. The railway lines run from north to south, the French line constituting the Eastern boundary, while the English line runs between Zadoc Kahn and Palacios. Herr Arturo Bab, the Director of Moisesville, is an agriculturist trained in Prussia, and taught for some time in the Jewish Agricultural School at Ahlem, near Hanover. He has been about seven years at Mauricio Colony, but only some months in Moisesville. The late Administrator was Mr. Miquel Cohan.

The Pampa

What most impresses the European traveller about the Province of Santa Fé in general and Moisesville Colony in particular, is the treeless flatness of the place. It forms part of the endless pampa. The soil is very rich, and produces six to eight crops of lucerne or alfalfa grass every year. There is no lack of water, though it is said that since the ground has been cultivated, one has to dig two or three times as deep for it as one used to, but it is always found within nine metres of the surface. When I was there, there was, unfortunately, too much water. Tropical rain-storms had destroyed two months' crops of alfalfa and most of the wheat, and only the maize was still promising. The colonists were much depressed.

The heat was terrific; there was no shade, and it was obvious that even the cattle, some of which were fine English beasts, suffered from want of shade. Each colonist is allowed a few Eucalyptus trees gratis, and as many Paraiso trees as he wants. Paraiso trees have the advantage of being distasteful to the locust. But our colonists are either too poor or too lazy to plant trees except when an immediate profit is in sight, and so the fine Durham cows and even the native horses languish and deteriorate. Only one of the colonists at Moisesville keeps sheep, although I saw some good flocks in the part of Palacios not yet acquired by the Jewish Colonization Association, where also were some fine avenues of trees planted perhaps twenty years ago. And there are some trees round the administration building and the synagogue.

Prospects

One cannot help feeling somewhat discouraged at the prospects of Moisesville or the aptitudes of the Jewish agriculturist there. Perhaps he has more chances at Mauricio, which is in the Province of Buenos Ayres itself, and only eight hours from the capital. Land there is constantly appreciating in value, and is now worth three times what Baron de Hirsch gave for it. But at Moisesville and, indeed, throughout the Province of Santa Fé, a succession of bad years has kept the value of land stationary, and even the great English cattle-breeding estancia of St. Cristobal (two or three stations to the north of Moisesville) is said to be doing badly. The scattered Colonies in Entre Rios, on the other side of the River Plate, are said to be not more satisfactory. I met a Government Inspector of Agriculture on the railway, and he told me that hitherto the direction of our Colony had been bad, and altogether he was not very optimistic as to its future. This was the more disappointing after the congratulatory tone of the letter of Senor Iturraspe, the Intendente of Santa Fé, who visited the Colony in January, 1902. It is published in the Jewish Colonization Association Report of June 22, 1902, but, of course, allowance should be made for the inevitable exaggeration of a polite Castilian visitor.

The Jew seems to be too speculative to make a good agriculturist even in the Argentine. He is too fond of putting all his eggs into one basket. Lucerne grass paid very well, indeed, in 1901, and so he has devoted himself this year almost exclusively to lucerne. The rain spoils the crop, and he is down in the dumps, and,

especially if a Roumanian, quite prepared to throw up the game and go to Rosario or Buenos Ayres and start a business in the town, or open a shop, or travel the country as a colporteur. If he went in for dairy-farming as well as for agriculture proper, if he cultivated different kinds of crops at the same time, he would, under favorable conditions, make a little less, but the least favorable would do him no irretrievable damage, and he would have no needto be discouraged by a single failure; he would divide his risks.

And agriculture *is* risky in the Argentine. Nature is in some respects very kind. The soil is of almost incredible richness. There is rich loam or vegetable earth many centimetres deep all over Moisesville, but the tropics are too near to justify one in placing any reliance on the climate. One year there is drought, locusts ravage the pampas in another year, and next year heavy rains, out of season, spoil the harvest. And yet it is wonderful to see fifty-acre fields, neat and trim, with clouds of yellow butterflies hovering around, where, fifteen years ago, fierce pumas prowled and wild Indians successfully beat back the timid advances of civilization. For the improvement, candor must praise the railway as much as the Jewish Colonization Association, but even the Jewish Colonization Association may do something with the second generation of its *protégés*. The children of our colonists have nothing of the ghetto bend about them. Fearless and high-spirited, the boys and girls ride the horses bare-backed, and they at least are really attached to the land.

Russians and Roumanians Compared

There is a great difference, they say, between the Russians and the Roumanians. The Russian gets on better than the Roumanian—at first. His standard of comfort is lower, he is less extravagant, more easily satisfied with small mercies, and less discouraged by the rebuffs either of nature or of man. But the Roumanian is more intelligent, and gets on better with the natives. His language is not very different from the Spanish, and a year suffices to make his Castilian fluent and even classical—no mean advantage, when it is remembered that all the year round Spanish persons have to be employed on the farm, and during harvest time every colonist has to engage at least three or four to aid him in preparing his produce for market. Hired labor, however, is expensive, and, if anything, the Roumanian's family is smaller than the Russian's, and so he has less gratuitous help. He finds it very difficult to make both ends meet, especially in a bad year, and so he gravitates to the towns.

A different case, leading to the same result, came under my notice when I left Palacios. At the next station a young man boarded the train whose friends had driven him about ten miles from Moisesville to see him off. It turned out that he was a widower with a furniture shop in Buenos Ayres, who had spent the last three days in the Colony making the acquaintance of a young lady (an attractive young Jewess of sweet seventeen) to whom he had just become engaged to be married. The farewell was affectionate in the extreme, and he was to come back again in a couple of months to fetch his bride. He was a Caucasian from

the neighborhood of Rostow, and his father had been an original colonist of Entre Rios, where they kept a Kosher butcher shop. A Spaniard in his cups had knifed a Jew called Abraham Bondarow, or some such name, and had threatened to treat my friend in the same way. He thought discretion the better part of valor, and got his people to leave the Colony to the tender mercies of the unpunished murderer. They migrated to Buenos Ayres, and still grumble that the Jewish Colonization Association allowed them only three hundred dollars for unexhausted improvements, the value of which they estimate at ten times that sum. But they have done very well.

Jews in Argentine

Whatever one's opinion may be about the value or success of the Colonies themselves, there can be no doubt that it is almost exclusively owing to them that there is a Jewish population of thirty thousand in the Argentine, of which a third are to be found in the capital. They have two synagogues there, both in the Calle Liberdad. In the rest of the mainland of South America there are hardly any Jews. In Panama there are a few, who have a burial ground of their own, the Hebrew inscriptions on which gave me a turn as I tramped one appallingly hot day from the Bocas to that city. In Peru there are perhaps a dozen, including the Jamaica-born daughter of an Englishman married to a dentist from the Danish Island of St. Thomas. In Chili there are hardly more, and in Brazil, although there used to be an agent of the *Alliance Israélite* at Rio, till he died a few months before my visit, there is neither synagogue nor Minyan

to be found throughout the Continent, except perhaps on Kippur. But the Argentine constitutes a notable exception, and judging from the analogies which Buenos Ayres, with its rapidly increasing population of eight hundred thousand, presents to New York, it would not be surprising to find the Jewish millionaire as frequent there a generation hence as he is now in the United States. But as to his agricultural future I am far less sanguine. For the rest, the central office of the Jewish Colonization Association in Buenos Ayres is located in a handsome mansion in the Calle Callao, where reside the two joint directors, about whom, to their credit be it said, rumor has never suggested that they have ever had a difference of opinion. The one is Mr. Cazès, formerly Director of the *Alliance Israélite* Schools at Tunis, and author of a bibliography and history of Tunis Jews. The other is Mr. Hirsch, sometime Principal of the Agricultural School at Jaffa, Mikveh Israel.

The Hope of Israel is hardly to be found in South America. My visit did not elate me, and after making every allowance for the personal equation, and for the unfortunate damage to the crops which I witnessed, not to mention the personal torment inflicted by the mosquitoes and flies, which positively swarmed over the damp soil, my prevailing sentiment was one of disappointment tempered by the interest excited by the strange birds—owls and cardinals, bustards and scissors birds—one saw, and by the snakes which were not seen but rumored. Perhaps Mauricio would have been more encouraging.

A VISIT TO THE KOWNO RAV

Kowno — An Illegal Assembly — Table Talk — Spector's Responsa — His Broad-mindedness.

Kowno

One hot Thursday morning in August, 1889, I arrived at the ancient city of the Teutonic Knights after a short but wretched night in the train. The place seemed very strange at that early hour—clean, but sleepy, and very few people about—and those had no German. The two Russian (?) words that constituted my vocabulary had to be constantly brought into requisition to enable me to make for my destination. There were no cabs to be seen, and no Jews. For the Droshky it was too early, and the Jews were all in synagogue, I suppose. It was the time of the morning prayer, and there are twenty-five synagogues in Kowno without counting Minyanim, and though more than half the inhabitants are Jews, the whole population is only about fifty thousand. But every Christian that I met, Greek or Roman, seemed to recognize the words, "Staro Rabben," for he pointed onward to the west. And so I walked on and on for about an hour, right through the city, on to the straight high road leading countryward. The air was busy with the hum of bees, the roadside gay with flowers. The country-folk were trooping cheerfully into town, and the suburban houses looked comfortable and prosperous. Anything less like one's anticipation of a Russian environment, or, indeed, one's experience at Warsaw or Brest or

Wilna, could hardly be imagined. But then Kowno is much nearer to Königsberg than it is to the Russian capital.

An Illegal Assembly

And yet it was not many minutes before I realized that I was in Russia after all. About seven o'clock I reached a modest-looking sort of farmhouse, the summer quarters of the Kowno Rav. To my inquiry for him, a distinctly Jewish-looking servant girl pointed to an outhouse on the other side of the road, and told me in fairly intelligible Yiddish, the Rav was at prayers there. I crossed the road and tried to open the door of the shanty, but it was barred and bolted. I knocked and at last the door was cautiously opened just wide enough to enable one of our co-religionists to project a timid head. Who was I? Where did I come from? What did I want? I explained that I was a Jew and wanted to join the Minyan. Somewhat hesitatingly, I was admitted, but, once inside, I had no ground to complain of suspicion or unfriendliness. I had my Tephillin with me and was called up "Cohen." The room was bare of furniture—a table and a little Ark and one chair, in which sat a grizzled octogenarian with full face and piercing eyes. After service I introduced myself to him, and asked why there had been so much unwillingness to admit me. "O," said he, "we are in Goluth and it is illegal to hold Minyan out of town. Even you, for merely joining it, have made yourself liable to a fine of one hundred roubles! We thought you were the police, but as you are an Englishman, and the son of an honored friend, come and have breakfast with me."

Table Talk

During breakfast, and for some hours or two after, he talked much and despondently of Jewish disabilities in Russia, and contrasted his country's persecution with the liberty we enjoy in England. To him the streets of London were almost as familiar as the paths of his own Nahardea, although, but for one memorable journey to meet Montefiore on his mission to Czar Nicholas, he has hardly moved out of Kowno since he left his first Rabbinate in Novoradok. He was in constant correspondence with several London friends, was intimately acquainted with the affairs of Shechita there, and familiar with all the sectarian politics of Whitechapel. He was a staunch ally of our ecclesiastical authorities as lawfully constituted, and deprecated and denounced the mischief-making and turbulence of "ungrateful" countrymen of his own, who caused strife and discord in the land of their adoption.

Of himself he talked little and of affairs so diplomatically and sensibly that, though evidently no longer in his prime, he thoroughly justified his great reputation. And his reputation was unmistakably great—at Paris and at Berlin, at London and at Jerusalem, as much as at Wilna itself, the Kehilla of his son—appropriately styled "Rabbinowitz," the "Rabbi's Son." All along the Russo-Polish railway line I had heard of him and his goodness. Not the least of his admirers was a New Woman of Riga, who wrote German novels and sketches and articles, and who was often the literary mouthpiece of her persecuted brothers and sisters. She died a couple of years ago, poor thing, or I had not dared say so much.

Spector's Responsa

A few months later and Rabbi Isaac Elkan Spector was dead. He was mourned as a very Prince in Israel. The loss can never be quite made good, for the position he held was unique. It was due not so much to the authority he compelled as an unrivalled Talmudist, as to the complete confidence he enjoyed for tact and unselfish singleness of purpose. He leaves us a formidable array of literature, sufficient to command the respect of even so doughty a bibliographer as Steinschneider. His three most important works are collections of Responsa, for he was probably the most consulted of modern Rabbis.

One of his Responsa will illustrate the continuity of Jewish thought throughout the Middle Ages and right through the altered conditions induced by scientific discoveries. It is an examination into the question of the relative sanctity of the proof sheet, as to whether Hebrew proof sheets may be destroyed, or should be preserved in common with all that is written in the sacred language for a sacred purpose. The Rabbi decides that they are in their very nature ephemeral, and full of faults, and that it is a mercy to destroy them. Can a question appear more trivial? And yet it is due to our loving regard for such trifles that the whole literary world is justified in being on the *qui vive* for some fresh lucky discovery that we may owe to research, in some Genizah or synagogue *cache*.

His Broad-mindedness

Although himself one of the most pious men in Russia, the Rabbi was what is known as a מקיל toward

others. He judged all men charitably, and ever strove to make the thorny path of his religion a little broader, a little easier. And he could afford to do this, for no Pharisee of them all had ever ventured to charge him with laxity. He was Hillel to the Shammai of his Litvak colleagues. Especially was this so in the case of עגונות, women whose husbands had disappeared, and whom the letter of the law precluded from marrying again. For these he ever sought to find a היתר and to accept as proof of widowhood what was only circumstantial evidence of a stronger kind. Thus, in one of the Responsa in עין יצחק (vol. I. II, 31) he cites the case of a poor woman whose husband had been lost in England's huge metropolis. But a body had been found in the Thames, and the police photograph of the corpse had been identified by the Beth Din here as that of the man whose photograph the wife-widow produced to them. The Kowno Rav thought this quite enough, but I can remember my dear teacher, the late Rabbi Jacob Reinowitz, himself a member of the Beth Din, telling me of it with just the slightest shadow of a shade of shocked disapproval. I fancy this was the very case, but among the Responsa there are several others of a similar nature referable to London. It is not so easy to identify them, as it was to identify the "found dead," for the author, with characteristic modesty, suppresses all names of places and persons, and eliminates from his report all but the facts and the argument. Throughout orthodox Jewry he was consulted as the highest authority on Din, his certificate of competency was eagerly sought by *Rabbinatscandidaten*, and his imprimatur dearly prized by the Hebrew publisher. His Haskama fre-

quently prefaces modern Rabbinic books, even where it merely contains the naïve business statement that he has paid for them in advance: ונתתי דמי קריכה כנהוג

Spector's great reputation was in no sense derived from official position or external glories. Of the paraphernalia of the ecclesiastical dignitary he possessed none, unless, perhaps, as such you can regard his Meshareth and Sopher and the half-score of *unpaid* Minyan men, who trudged three miles every morning along the flat and dusty high-road, in order to pray with him. Even in Kowno the only officially recognized Rabbi was the *Kronrabbiner*. Still, the Russian Government, on matters affecting its Jewish subjects as a class, treated with him rather than its own functionary. It was wise enough to recognize the fact that Rabbi Isaac was a representative man although not an official. And in this it resembled a wide-awake Bishop, who preferred to deal with an energetic Non-conformist Minister in a parish rather than with its pompous Rector. If even Russia's unfriendly Government missed him when he died, what shall we say who are of his own people, and who mourn in him one who was known throughout Israel as רבן של כל בני הגולה—"the Teacher of all Sons of the Captivity?"

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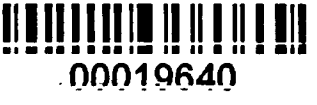
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